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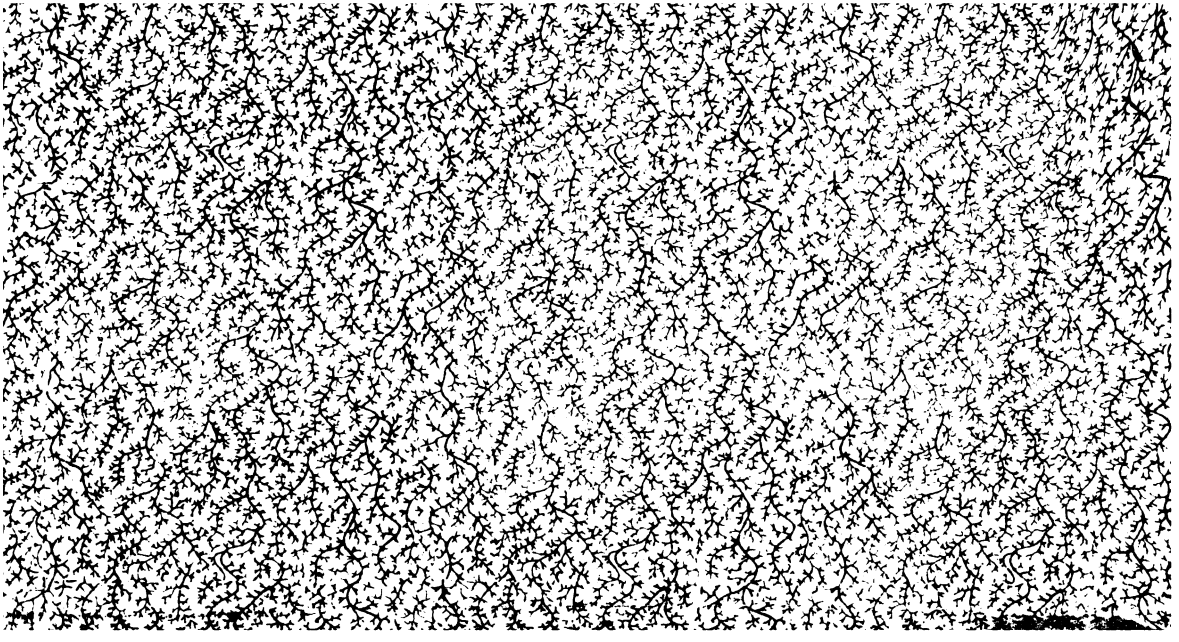

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

POEMS

OF

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In Four Volumes.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
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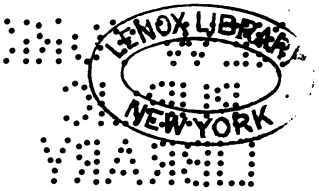
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THE

WHITE DOE

OF

RYLSTONE;

OR

THE FATE OF THE NORTONS.

During the summer of 1807, *the Author visited, for the first time, the beautiful Scenery that surrounds Bolton Priory, in Yorkshire; and the Poem of* THE WHITE DOE, *founded upon a Tradition connected with the place, was composed at the close of the same year.*

"They that deny a God, destroy Man's nobility: for certainly Man is of kinn to the Beasts by his Body; and if he be not of kinn to God by his Spirit, he is a base ignoble Creature. It destroys likewise Magnanimity, and the raising of humane Nature: for take an example of a Dogg, and mark what a generosity and courage he will put on, when he finds himself maintained by a Man, who to him is instead of a God, or Melior Natura. Which courage is manifestly such, as that Creature without that confidence of a better Nature than his own, could never attain. So Man, when he resteth and assureth himself upon Divine protection and favour, gathereth a force and faith which human Nature in itself could not obtain."

LORD BACON.

" Weak is the will of Man, his judgment blind;
Remembrance persecutes, and Hope betrays;
Heavy is woe; — and joy, for human kind,
A mournful thing, so transient is the blaze!" —
Thus might *he* paint our lot of mortal days
Who wants the glorious faculty, assigned
To elevate the more-than-reasoning Mind,
And colour life's dark cloud with orient rays.
Imagination is that sacred power,
Imagination lofty and refined:
'Tis her's to pluck the amaranthine Flower
Of Faith, and round the Sufferer's temples bind
Wreaths that endure affliction's heaviest shower,
And do not shrink from sorrow's keenest wind.

In trellised shed with clustering roses gay,
And, MARY! *oft beside our blazing fire,*
When years of wedded life were as a day
Whose current answers to the heart's desire,
Did we together read in Spenser's Lay
How Una, sad of soul — in sad attire,
The gentle Una, born of heavenly birth,
To seek her Knight went wandering o'er the earth.

Ah, then, Beloved! pleasing was the smart,
And the tear precious in compassion shed
For Her, who, pierced by sorrow's thrilling dart,
Did meekly bear the pang unmerited;
Meek as that emblem of her lowly heart
The milk-white Lamb which in a line she led, —
And faithful, loyal in her innocence,
Like the brave Lion slain in her defence.

Notes could we hear as of a faery shell
Attuned to words with sacred wisdom fraught;
Free Fancy prized each specious miracle,
And all its finer inspiration caught;
'Till, in the bosom of our rustic Cell,
We by a lamentable change were taught
That "bliss with mortal Man may not abide:"—
How nearly joy and sorrow are allied!

For us the stream of fiction ceased to flow,
For us the voice of melody was mute.
— But, as soft gales dissolve the dreary snow
And give the timid herbage leave to shoot,
Heaven's breathing influence failed not to bestow
A timely promise of unlooked-for fruit,
Fair fruit of pleasure and serene content
From blossoms wild of fancies innocent.

It soothed us — it beguiled us — then, to hear
Once more of troubles wrought by magic spell;
And griefs whose aery motion comes not near
The pangs that tempt the Spirit to rebel;

Then, with mild Una in her sober chear,
High over hill and low adown the dell
Again we wandered, willing to partake
All that she suffered for her dear Lord's sake.

Then, too, this Song of mine *once more could please,*
Where anguish, strange as dreams of restless sleep,
Is tempered and allayed by sympathies
Aloft ascending, and descending deep,
Even to the inferior Kinds; whom forest trees
Protect from beating sunbeams, and the sweep
Of the sharp winds; —fair Creatures! — to whom
Heaven
A calm and sinless life, with love, hath given.

This tragic Story cheared us; for it speaks
Of female patience winning firm repose;
And of the recompense which conscience seeks
A bright, encouraging example shows;
Needful when o'er wide realms the tempest breaks,
Needful amid life's ordinary woes; —
Hence, not for them unfitted who would bless
A happy hour with holier happiness.

He serves the Muses erringly and ill,
Whose aim is pleasure light and fugitive:
O, that my mind were equal to fulfill
The comprehensive mandate which they give —
Vain aspiration of an earnest will!
Yet in this moral Strain a power may live,
Beloved Wife! such solace to impart
As it hath yielded to thy tender heart.

RYDAL MOUNT, WESTMORELAND,
April 20, 1815.

THE

WHITE DOE OF RYLSTONE.

CANTO FIRST.

FROM Bolton's old monastic tower
The bells ring loud with gladsome power;
The sun is bright; the fields are gay
With people in their best array
Of stole and doublet, hood and scarf,
Along the banks of crystal Wharf,
Through the Vale retired and lowly,
Trooping to that summons holy.
And, up among the moorlands, see
What sprinklings of blithe company!
Of lasses and of shepherd grooms,
That down the steep hills force their way,
Like cattle through the budded brooms;
Path, or no path, what care they?
And thus in joyous mood they hie
To Bolton's mouldering Priory.

What would they there? — Full fifty years
That sumptuous Pile, with all its peers,
Too harshly hath been doomed to taste
The bitterness of wrong and waste:
Its courts are ravaged; but the tower
Is standing with a voice of power,
That ancient voice which wont to call
To mass or some high festival;
And in the shattered fabric's heart
Remaineth one protected part;
A rural Chapel, neatly drest,
In covert like a little nest;
And thither young and old repair,
This Sabbath-day, for praise and prayer.

Fast the church-yard fills; — anon
Look again, and they all are gone;
The cluster round the porch, and the folk
Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak!
And scarcely have they disappeared
Ere the prelusive hymn is heard:—
With one consent the people rejoice,
Filling the church with a lofty voice!
They sing a service which they feel:
For 'tis the sun-rise now of zeal,

And faith and hope are in their prime,
In great Eliza's golden time.

A moment ends the fervent din,
And all is hushed, without and within;
For though the priest, more tranquilly,
Recites the holy liturgy,
The only voice which you can hear
Is the river murmuring near.
— When soft! — the dusky trees between,
And down the path through the open green,
Where is no living thing to be seen;
And through yon gateway, where is found,
Beneath the arch with ivy bound,
Free entrance to the church-yard ground;
And right across the verdant sod
Towards the very house of God;
— Comes gliding in with lovely gleam,
Comes gliding in serene and slow,
Soft and silent as a dream,
A solitary Doe!
White she is as lily of June,
And beauteous as the silver moon

When out of sight the clouds are driven,
And she is left alone in heaven;
Or like a ship some gentle day
In sunshine sailing far away,
A glittering ship, that hath the plain
Of ocean for her own domain.

Lie silent in your graves ye dead!
Lie quiet in your church-yard bed!
Ye living tend your holy cares,
Ye multitude pursue your prayers,
And blame not me if my heart and sight
Are occupied with one delight!
'Tis a work for sabbath hours
If I with this bright Creature go;
Whether she be of forest bowers,
From the bowers of earth below;
Or a Spirit, for one day given,
A gift of grace from purest heaven.

What harmonious pensive changes
Wait upon her as she ranges
Round and through this Pile of state,
Overthrown and desolate!

Now a step or two her way
Is through space of open day,
Where the enamoured sunny light
Brightens her that was so bright;
Now doth a delicate shadow fall,
Falls upon her like a breath,
From some lofty arch or wall,
As she passes underneath:
Now some gloomy nook partakes
Of the glory that she makes, —
High-ribbed vault of stone, or cell
With perfect cunning framed as well
Of stone, and ivy, and the spread
Of the elder's bushy head;
Some jealous and forbidding cell,
That doth the living stars repel,
And where no flower hath leave to dwell.

The presence of this wandering Doe
Fills many a damp obscure recess
With lustre of a saintly show;
And, re-appearing, she no less
To the open day gives blessedness.

But say, among these holy places,
Which thus assiduously she paces,
Comes she with a votary's task,
Rite to perform, or boon to ask?
Fair Pilgrim! harbours she a sense
Of sorrow, or of reverence?
Can she be grieved for quire or shrine,
Crushed as if by wrath divine?
For what survives of house where God
Was worshipped, or where Man abode;
For old magnificence undone;
Or for the gentler work begun
By Nature, softening and concealing,
And busy with a hand of healing, —
The altar, whence the cross was rent,
Now rich with mossy ornament, —
The dormitory's length laid bare,
Where the wild rose blossoms fair;
And sapling ash, whose place of birth
Is that lordly chamber's hearth?
— She sees a warrior carved in stone,
Among the thick weeds, stretched alone;
A warrior, with his shield of pride
Cleaving humbly to his side,

And hands in resignation prest,
Palm to palm, on his tranquil breast:
Methinks she passeth by the sight,
As a common creature might:
If she be doomed to inward care,
Or service, it must lie elsewhere.
— But hers are eyes serenely bright,
And on she moves — with pace how light!
Nor spares to stoop her head, and taste
The dewy turf with flowers bestrown;
And in this way she fares, till at last
Beside the ridge of a grassy grave
In quietness she lays her down;
Gently as a weary wave
Sinks, when the summer breeze hath died.
Against an anchored vessel's side;
Even so, without distress, doth she
Lie down in peace, and lovingly.

The day is placid in its going,
To a lingering motion bound,
Like the river in its flowing —
Can there be a softer sound?

So the balmy minutes pass,
While this radiant Creature lies
Couched upon the dewy grass,
Pensively with downcast eyes.
—When now again the people rear
A voice of praise, with awful chear!
It is the last, the parting song;
And from the temple forth they throng—
And quickly spread themselves abroad—
While each pursues his several road.
But some, a variegated band
Of middle-aged, and old, and young,
And little children by the hand
Upon their leading mothers hung,
Turn, with obeisance gladly paid,
Towards the spot, where, full in view,
The lovely Doe of whitest hue,
Her sabbath couch has made.

It was a solitary mound;
Which two spears' length of level ground
Did from all other graves divide:
As if in some respect of pride;

Or melancholy's sickly mood,
Still shy of human neighbourhood;
Or guilt, that humbly would express
A penitential loneliness.

"Look, there she is, my Child! draw near;
She fears not, wherefore should we fear?
She means no harm;"—but still the Boy,
To whom the words were softly said,
Hung back, and smiled and blushed for joy,
A shame-faced blush of glowing red!
Again the Mother whispered low,
"Now you have seen the famous Doe;
From Rylstone she hath found her way
Over the hills this sabbath-day;
Her work, whate'er it be, is done,
And she will depart when we are gone;
Thus doth she keep, from year to year,
Her sabbath morning, foul or fair."

This whisper soft repeats what he
Had known from early infancy.

Bright is the Creature — as in dreams
The Boy had seen her — yea more bright —
But is she truly what she seems? —
He asks with insecure delight,
Asks of himself — and doubts — and still
The doubt returns against his will:
Though he, and all the standers-by,
Could tell a tragic history
Of facts divulged, wherein appear
Substantial motive, reason clear,
Why thus the milk-white Doe is found
Couchant beside that lonely mound;
And why she duly loves to pace
The circuit of this hallowed place.
Nor to the Child's enquiring mind
Is such perplexity confined:
For, 'spite of sober truth, that sees
A world of fixed remembrances
Which to this mystery belong,
If, undeceived, my skill can trace
The characters of every face,
There lack not strange delusion here,
Conjecture vague, and idle fear,

And superstitious fancies strong,
Which do the gentle Creature wrong.

That bearded, staff-supported Sire,
(Who in his youth had often fed
Full cheerily on convent-bread,
And heard old tales by the convent-fire,
And lately hath brought home the scars
Gathered in long and distant wars)
That Old Man — studious to expound
The spectacle — hath mounted high
To days of dim antiquity;
When Lady Aäliza mourned
Her Son, and felt in her despair,
The pang of unavailing prayer;
Her Son in Wharf's abysses drowned,
The noble Boy of Egremound.
From which affliction, when God's grace
At length had in her heart found place,
A pious structure, fair to see,
Rose up — this stately Priory!
The Lady's work, — but now laid low;
To the grief of her soul that doth come and go,
In the beautiful form of this innocent Doe:

Which, though seemingly doomed in its breast to
sustain
A softened remembrance of sorrow and pain,
Is spotless, and holy, and gentle, and bright, —
And glides o'er the earth like an angel of light.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door;
And, through the chink in the fractured floor
Look down, and see a griesly sight;
A vault where the bodies are buried upright!
There face by face, and hand by hand,
The Claphams and Mauleverers stand;
And, in his place, among son and sire,
Is John de Clapham, that fierce Esquire, —
A valiant man, and a name of dread,
In the ruthless wars of the White and Red; —
Who dragged Earl Pembroke from Banbury church,
And smote off his head on the stones of the porch!
Look down among them, if you dare;
Oft does the White Doe loiter there,
Prying into the darksome rent;
Nor can it be with good intent: —
So thinks that Dame of haughty air,

Who hath a Page her book to hold,
And wears a frontlet edged with gold.
Well may her thoughts be harsh; for she
Numbers among her ancestry
Earl Pembroke, slain so impiously!

That slender Youth, a scholar pale,
From Oxford come to his native vale,
He also hath his own conceit:
It is, thinks he, the gracious Fairy,
Who loved the Shepherd Lord to meet
In his wanderings solitary;
Wild notes she in his hearing sang,
A song of Nature's hidden powers;
That whistled like the wind, and rang
Among the rocks and holly bowers.
'Twas said that she all shapes could wear;
And oftentimes before him stood,
Amid the trees of some thick wood,
In semblance of a lady fair,
And taught him signs, and shewed him sights,
In Craven's dens, on Cumbria's heights;

When under cloud of fear he lay,
A shepherd clad in homely grey,
Nor left him at his later day.
And hence, when he, with spear and shield,
Rode full of years to Flodden field,
His eye could see the hidden spring,
And how the current was to flow;
The fatal end of Scotland's King,
And all that hopeless overthrow.
But not in wars did he delight,
This Clifford wished for worthier might;
Nor in broad pomp, or courtly state;
Him his own thoughts did elevate, —
Most happy in the shy recess
Of Barden's humble quietness.
And choice of studious friends had he
Of Bolton's dear fraternity;
Who, standing on this old church tower,
In many a calm propitious hour,
Perused, with him, the starry sky; —
Or in their cells with him did pry
For other lore, — through strong desire
Searching the earth with chemic fire:

But they and their good works are fled —
And all is now disquieted —
And peace is none, for living or dead;

Ah, pensive Scholar! think not so,
But look again at the radiant Doe!
What quiet watch she seems to keep,
Alone, beside that grassy heap!

Why mention other thoughts unmeet
For vision so composed and sweet?
While stand the people in a ring,
Gazing, doubting, questioning;
Yea, many overcome in spite
Of recollections clear and bright;
Which yet do unto some impart
An undisturbed repose of heart.
And all the assembly own a law
Of orderly respect and awe;
But see — they vanish, one by one,
And last, the Doe herself is gone.

Harp! we have been full long beguiled
By busy dreams, and fancies wild;

To which, with no reluctant strings,
Thou hast attuned thy murmurings;
And now before this Pile we stand
In solitude, and utter peace:
But, harp! thy murmurs may not cease, —
Thou hast breeze-like visitings;
For a Spirit with angel wings
Hath touched thee, and a Spirit's hand:
A voice is with us — a command
To chaunt, in strains of heavenly glory,
A tale of tears, a mortal story!

CANTO SECOND.

THE Harp in lowliness obeyed:
And first we sang of the green-wood shade,
And a solitary Maid;
Beginning, where the song must end,
With her, and with her sylvan Friend;
The friend who stood before her sight,
Her only unextinguished light, —
Her last companion in a dearth
Of love, upon a hopeless earth.

For She it was, — 'twas She who wrought
Meekly, with foreboding thought,
In vermeil colours and in gold
An unblessed work; which, standing by,
Her Father did with joy behold, —
Exulting in the imagery;
A Banner, one that did fulfil
Too perfectly his headstrong will:

For on this Banner had her hand
Embroidered (such was the command)
The Sacred Cross; and figured there
The five dear wounds our Lord did bear;
Full soon to be uplifted high,
And float in rueful company!

It was the time when England's Queen
Twelve years had reigned, a sovereign dread;
Nor yet the restless crown had been
Disturbed upon her virgin head;
But now the inly-working North
Was ripe to send its thousands forth,
A potent vassalage, to fight
In Percy's and in Neville's right, —
Two earls fast leagued in discontent,
Who gave their wishes open vent;
And boldly urged a general plea,
The rites of ancient piety
To be triumphantly restored;
By the dread justice of the sword!
And that same Banner, on whose breast
The blameless Lady had exprest,

Memorials chosen to give life,
And sunshine to a dangerous strife;
This Banner, waiting for the call,
Stood quietly in Rylstone Hall.

It came, — and Francis Norton said,
" O Father! rise not in this fray —
The hairs are white upon your head;
Dear Father, hear me when I say
It is for you too late a day!
Bethink you of your own good name;
A just and gracious queen have we,
A pure religion, and the claim
Of peace on our humanity.
'Tis meet that I endure your scorn, —
I am your son, your eldest born;
But not for lordship or for land,
My Father, do I clasp your knees —
The Banner touch not, stay your hand, —
This multitude of men disband,
And live at home in blissful ease;
For these my brethren's sake, for me;
And, most of all, for Emily!"

Loud noise was in the crowded hall,
And scarcely could the Father hear
That name — which had a dying fall,
The name of his only Daughter dear, —
And on the banner which stood near
He glanced a look of holy pride,
And his moist eyes were glorified;
Then seized the staff, and thus did say:
"Thou, Richard, bear'st thy father's name,
Keep thou this ensign till the day
When I of thee require the same:
Thy place be on my better hand; —
And seven as true as thou, I see,
Will cleave to this good cause and me."
He spake, and eight brave sons straightway
All followed him, a gallant band!

Forth when Sire and Sons appeared
A gratulating shout was reared,
With din of arms and minstrelsy,
From all his warlike tenantry,
All horsed and harnessed with him to ride;
— A shout to which the hills replied!

But Francis, in the vacant hall,
Stood silent under dreary weight, —
A phantasm, in which roof and wall
Shook — tottered — swam before his sight,
A phantasm like a dream of night.
Thus overwhelmed, and desolate,
He found his way to a postern-gate;
And, when he waked at length his eye
Was on the calm and silent sky;
With air about him breathing sweet,
And earth's green grass beneath his feet;
Nor did he fail ere long to hear
A sound of military chear,
Faint — but it reached that sheltered spot;
He heard, and it disturbed him not.

There stood he, leaning on a lance
Which he had grasped unknowingly, —
Had blindly grasped in that strong trance,
That dimness of heart agony;
There stood he, cleansed from the despair
And sorrow of his fruitless prayer.
The past he calmly hath reviewed:
But where will be the fortitude

Of this brave Man, when he shall see
That Form beneath the spreading tree,
And know that it is Emily?
Oh! hide them from each other, hide,
Kind Heaven, this pair severely tried!

He saw her where in open view
She sate beneath the spreading yew, —
Her head upon her lap, concealing
In solitude her bitter feeling:
How could he chuse but shrink or sigh?
He shrunk, and muttered inwardly,
"Might ever son *command* a sire,
The act were justified to-day."
This to himself — and to the Maid,
Whom now he had approached, he said,
— "Gone are they, — they have their desire;
And I with thee one hour will stay,
To give thee comfort if I may."

He paused, her silence to partake,
And long it was before he spake:
Then, all at once, his thoughts turned round,
And fervent words a passage found.

" Gone are they, bravely, though misled,
With a dear Father at their head!
The Sons obey a natural lord;
The Father had given solemn word
To noble Percy, — and a force,
Still stronger, bends him to his course.
This said, our tears to-day may fall,
As at an innocent funeral.
In deep and awful channel runs
This sympathy of Sire and Sons;
Untried our Brothers were beloved,
And now their faithfulness is proved;
For faithful we must call them, bearing
That soul of conscientious daring.
— There were they all in circle — there
Stood Richard, Ambrose, Christopher,
John with a sword that will not fail,
And Marmaduke in fearless mail,
And those bright Twins were side by side;
And there, by fresh hopes beautified,
Was He, whose arm yet lacks the power
Of man, our youngest, fairest flower!

I, by the right of eldest born,
And in a second father's place,
Presumed to stand against their scorn,
And meet their pity face to face;
Yea, trusting in God's holy aid,
I to my Father knelt and prayed;
And one, the pensive Marmaduke,
Methought, was yielding inwardly,
And would have laid his purpose by,
But for a glance of his Father's eye,
Which I myself could scarcely brook.

Then be we, each, and all, forgiven!
Thee, chiefly thee, my Sister dear,
Whose pangs are registered in heaven, —
The stifled sigh, the hidden tear,
And smiles, that dared to take their place,
Meek filial smiles, upon thy face,
As that unhallowed Banner grew
Beneath a loving old man's view.
Thy part is done — thy painful part;
Be thou then satisfied in heart!
A further, though far easier task
Than thine hath been, my duties ask;

With their's my efforts cannot blend,
I cannot for such cause contend;
Their aims I utterly forswear;
But I in body will be there.
Unarmed and naked will I go,
Be at their side, come weal or woe:
On kind occasions I may wait,
See, hear, obstruct, or mitigate.
Bare breast I take and an empty hand."—
Therewith he threw away the lance
Which he had grasped in that strong trance,
Spurned it — like something that would stand
Between him and the pure intent
Of love on which his soul was bent.

"For thee, for thee, is left the sense
Of trial past without offence
To God or Man; — such innocence,
Such consolation, and the excess
Of an unmerited distress;
In that thy very strength must lie.
— O Sister, I could prophesy!
The time is come that rings the knell
Of all we loved, and loved so well;—

Hope nothing, if I thus may speak
To thee a woman, and thence weak;
Hope nothing, I repeat; for we
Are doomed to perish utterly:
'Tis meet that thou with me divide
The thought while I am by thy side,
Acknowledging a grace in this,
A comfort in the dark abyss:
But look not for me when I am gone,
And be no farther wrought upon.
Farewell all wishes, all debate,
All prayers for this cause, or for that!
Weep, if that aid thee; but depend
Upon no help of outward friend;
Espouse thy doom at once, and cleave
To fortitude without reprieve.
For we must fall, both we and ours,—
This Mansion and these pleasant bowers;
Walks, pools, and arbours, homestead, hall,
Our fate is theirs, will reach them all;
The young Horse must forsake his manger,
And learn to glory in a Stranger;
The Hawk forget his perch — the Hound
Be parted from his ancient ground:

The blast will sweep us all away,
One desolation, one decay!
And even this Creature!" which words saying
He pointed to a lovely Doe,
A few steps distant, feeding, straying;
Fair Creature, and more white than snow!
" Even she will to her peaceful woods
Return, and to her murmuring floods,
And be in heart and soul the same
She was before she hither came,—
Ere she had learned to love us all,
Herself beloved in Rylstone Hall.
—But thou, my Sister, doomed to be
The last leaf which by heaven's decree
Must hang upon a blasted tree;
If not in vain we have breathed the breath
Together of a purer faith—
If hand in hand we have been led
And thou, (O happy thought this day!)
Not seldom foremost in the way—
If on one thought our minds have fed,
And we have in one meaning read—
If, when at home our private weal
Hath suffered from the shock of zeal,

Together we have learned to prize
Forbearance, and self-sacrifice —
If we like combatants have fared,
And for this issue been prepared —
If thou art beautiful, and youth
And thought endue thee with all truth —
Be strong; — be worthy of the grace
Of God, and fill thy destined place:
A soul, by force of sorrows high,
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed humanity!"

He ended, — or she heard no more:
He led her from the Yew-tree shade,
And at the Mansion's silent door,
He kissed the consecrated Maid;
And down the Valley he pursued,
Alone, the armed Multitude.

CANTO THIRD.

Now joy for you and sudden chear,
Ye Watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers;
Looking forth in doubt and fear,
Telling melancholy hours!
Proclaim it, let your Masters hear
That Norton with his Band is near!
The Watchmen from their station high
Pronounced the word, — and the Earls descry
Forthwith the armed Company
Marching down the banks of Were.

Said fearless Norton to the Pair
Gone forth to hail him on the Plain —
"This meeting, noble Lords! looks fair,
I bring with me a goodly train;
Their hearts are with you: — hill and dale
Have helped us: — Ure we crossed, and Swale,
And horse and harness followed — see
The best part of their Yeomanry!

— Stand forth, my Sons! — these eight are mine,
Whom to this service I commend;
Which way soe'er our fate incline
These will be faithful to the end;
They are my all" — voice failed him here,
"My all save one, a Daughter dear!
Whom I have left, the mildest birth,
The meekest Child on this blessed earth.
I had — but these are by my side
These eight, and this is a day of pride!
The time is ripe — with festive din
Lo! how the people are flocking in, —
Like hungry Fowl to the Feeder's hand
When snow lies heavy upon the land."

He spake bare truth; for far and near
From every side came noisy swarms
Of Peasants in their homely gear;
And, mixed with these, to Brancepeth came
Grave Gentry of estate and name,
And Captains known for worth in arms;
And prayed the Earls in self-defence
To rise, and prove their innocence. —

" Rise, noble Earls, put forth your might
For holy Church, and the People's right!"

The Norton fixed, at this demand,
His eye upon Northumberland,
And said, " The Minds of Men will own
No loyal rest while England's Crown
Remains without an Heir, the bait
Of strife and factions desperate;
Who, paying deadly hate in kind
Through all things else, in this can find
A mutual hope, a common mind;
And plot, and pant to overwhelm
All ancient honour in the realm.
— Brave Earls! to whose heroic veins
Our noblest blood is given in trust,
To you a suffering State complains,
And ye must raise her from the dust.
With wishes of still bolder scope
On you we look, with dearest hope,
Even for our Altars, — for the prize
In Heaven, of life that never dies;

For the old and holy Church we mourn,
And must in joy to her return.
Behold!"—and from his Son whose stand
Was on his right, from that guardian hand
He took the Banner, and unfurled
The precious folds—"behold," said he,
"The ransom of a sinful world;
Let this your preservation be,—
The wounds of hands and feet and side,
And the sacred Cross on which Jesus died!
—This bring I from an ancient hearth,
These Records wrought in pledge of love
By hands of no ignoble birth,
A Maid o'er whom the blessed Dove
Vouchsafed in gentleness to brood
While she the holy work pursued."
"Uplift the Standard!" was the cry
From all the Listeners that stood round,
"Plant it,—by this we live or die"—
The Norton ceased not for that sound,
But said, "The prayer which ye have heard,
Much injured Earls! by these preferred,

Is offered to the Saints, the sigh
Of tens of thousands, secretly." —
" Uplift it," cried once more the Band,
And then a thoughtful pause ensued.
" Uplift it!" said Northumberland —
Whereat, from all the multitude,
Who saw the Banner reared on high
In all its dread emblazonry,
With tumult and indignant rout
A voice of uttermost joy brake out:
The transport was rolled down the river of Were,
And Durham, the time-honoured Durham, did hear,
And the Towers of Saint Cuthbert were stirred by
the shout!

Now 'was the North in arms: — they shine
In warlike trim from Tweed to Tyne,
At Percy's voice: and Neville sees
His Followers gathering in from Tees,
From Were, and all the little Rills
Concealed among the forked Hills —
Seven hundred Knights, Retainers all
Of Neville, at their Master's call
Had sate together in Raby Hall!

Such strength that Earldom held of yore;
Nor wanted at this time rich store
Of well-appointed Chivalry.
— Not loth the sleepy lance to wield,
And greet the old paternal shield,
They heard the summons; — and, furthermore,
Came Foot and Horse-men of each degree,
Unbound by pledge of fealty;
Appeared, with free and open hate
Of novelties in Church and State;
Knight, Burgher, Yeoman, and Esquire;
And the Romish Priest, in Priest's attire.
And thus, in arms, a zealous Band
Proceeding under joint command,
To Durham first their course they bear;
And in Saint Cuthbert's ancient seat
Sang Mass, — and tore the book of Prayer, —
And trod the Bible beneath their feet.

Thence marching southward smooth and free,
" They mustered their Host at Wetherby,
Full sixteen thousand fair to see;" *

* From the old Ballad.

The choicest Warriors of the North!
But none for undisputed worth
Like those eight Sons; who in a ring,
Each with a lance — erect and tall,
A falchion, and a buckler small,
Stood by their Sire, on Clifford-moor,
In youthful beauty flourishing,
To guard the Standard which he bore.
— With feet that firmly pressed the ground
They stood, and girt their Father round;
Such was his choice, — no Steed will he
Henceforth bestride; — triumphantly
He stood upon the grassy sod,
Trusting himself to the earth, and God.
Rare sight to embolden and inspire!
Proud was the field of Sons and Sire,
Of him the most; and, sooth to say,
No shape of Man in all the array
So graced the sunshine of that day:
The monumental pomp of age
Was with this goodly Personage;
A stature undepressed in size,
Unbent, which rather seemed to rise,

In open victory o'er the weight
Of seventy years, to higher height;
Magnific limbs of withered state, —
A face to fear and venerate, —
Eyes dark and strong, and on his head
Rich locks of silver hair, thick-spread,
Which a brown morion half-concealed,
Light as a hunter's of the field;
And thus, with girdle round his waist,
Whereon the Banner-staff might rest
At need, he stood, advancing high
The glittering, floating Pageantry.

Who sees him? — many see, and One
With unparticipated gaze;
Who 'mong these thousands Friend hath none,
And treads in solitary ways.
He, following wheresoe'er he might,
Hath watched the Banner from afar,
As Shepherds watch a lonely star,
Or Mariners the distant light
That guides them on a stormy night.
And now, upon a chosen plot
Of rising ground, yon heathy spot!

He takes this day his far-off stand,
With breast unmailed, unweaponed hand.
— Bold is his aspect; but his eye
Is pregnant with anxiety,
While, like a tutelary Power,
He there stands fixed, from hour to hour,
Yet sometimes, in more humble guise,
Stretched out upon the ground he lies, —
As if it were his only task
Like Herdsman in the sun to bask,
Or by his mantle's help to find
A shelter from the nipping wind:
And thus, with short oblivion blest,
His weary spirits gather rest.
Again he lifts his eyes; and lo!
The pageant glancing to and fro;
And hope is wakened by the sight,
He thence may learn, ere fall of night,
Which way the tide is doomed to flow.

To London were the Chieftains bent;
But what avails the bold intent?
A Royal army is gone forth
To quell the Rising of the North;

They march with Dudley at their head,
And in seven days' space, will to York be led!
Can such a mighty Host be raised
Thus suddenly, and brought so near?
The Earls upon each other gazed;
And Neville was opprest with fear;
For, though he bore a valiant name,
His heart was of a timid frame,
And bold if both had been, yet they
"Against so many may not stay." *
And therefore will retreat to seize
A strong Hold on the banks of Tees;
There wait a favourable hour,
Until Lord Dacre with his power
From Naworth comes; and Howard's aid
Be with them — openly displayed.

While through the Host, from man to man,
A rumour of this purpose ran,
The Standard giving to the care
Of him who heretofore did bear
That charge, impatient Norton sought
The Chieftains to unfold his thought,

* From the old Ballad.

And thus abruptly spake, — "We yield
(And can it be?) an unfought field!
— How often hath the strength of heaven
To few triumphantly been given!
Still do our very children boast
Of mitred Thurston, what a Host
He conquered! — Saw we not the Plain,
(And flying shall behold again)
Where faith was proved? — while to battle moved
The Standard on the Sacred wain,
On which the grey-haired Barons stood,
And the infant Heir of Mowbray's blood,
Beneath the saintly Ensigns three,
Stood confident of victory!
Shall Percy blush, then, for his Name?
Must Westmoreland be asked with shame
Whose were the numbers, where the loss,
In that other day of Neville's Cross?
When, as the Vision gave command,
The Prior of Durham with holy hand
Saint Cuthbert's Relic did uprear
Upon the point of a lofty spear,
And God descended in his power,
While the Monks prayed in Maiden's Bower.

Less would not at our need be due
To us, who war against the Untrue; —
The delegates of Heaven we rise,
Convoked the impious to chastise;
We, we the sanctities of old
Would re-establish and uphold." —
— The Chiefs were by his zeal confounded,
But word was given — and the trumpet sounded;
Back through the melancholy Host
Went Norton, and resumed his post.
Alas! thought he, and have I borne
This Banner raised so joyfully,
This hope of all posterity,
Thus to become at once the scorn
Of babbling winds as they go by,
A spot of shame to the sun's bright eye,
To the frail clouds a mockery!
— "Even these poor eight of mine would stem;"
Half to himself, and half to them
He spake, "would stem, or quell a force
Ten times their number, man and horse;
This by their own unaided might,
Without their Father in their sight,
Without the Cause for which they fight;

A Cause, which on a needful day
Would breed us thousands brave as they."
— So speaking, he upraised his head
Towards that Imagery once more;
But the familiar prospect shed
Despondency unfelt before:
A shock of intimations vain,
Blank fear, and superstitious pain,
Fell on him, with the sudden thought
Of her by whom the work was wrought: —
Oh wherefore was her countenance bright
With love divine and gentle light?
She did in passiveness obey,
But her Faith leaned another way.
Ill tears she wept, — I saw them fall,
I overheard her as she spake
Sad words to that mute Animal,
The White Doe, in the hawthorn brake;
She steeped, but not for Jesu's sake,
This Cross in tears: — by her, and One
Unworthier far, we are undone —
Her Brother was it who assailed
Her tender spirit and prevailed.

Her other Parent, too, whose head
In the cold grave hath long been laid,
From reason's earliest dawn beguiled
The docile, unsuspecting Child:
Far back — far back my mind must go
To reach the well-spring of this woe! —
While thus he brooded, music sweet
Was played to chear them in retreat;
But Norton lingered in the rear:
Thought followed thought — and ere the last
Of that unhappy train was past,
Before him Francis did appear.

"Now when 'tis not your aim to oppose,"
Said he, "in open field your Foes;
Now that from this decisive day
Your multitude must melt away,
An unarmed Man may come unblamed;
To ask a grace, that was not claimed
Long as your hopes were high, he now
May hither bring a fearless brow;
When his discountenance can do,
No injury, — may come to you.

Though in your cause no part I bear,
Your indignation I can share;
Am grieved this backward march to see,
How careless and disorderly!
I scorn your Chieftains, Men who lead,
And yet want courage at their need;
Then look at them with open eyes!
Deserve they further sacrifice?
My Father! I would help to find
A place of shelter, till the rage
Of cruel men do like the wind
Exhaust itself and sink to rest;
Be Brother now to Brother joined!
Admit me in the equipage
Of your misfortunes, that at least,
Whatever fate remains behind,
I may bear witness in my breast
To your nobility of mind!"

"Thou Enemy, my bane and blight!
Oh! bold to fight the Coward's fight
Against all good"—but why declare,
At length, the issue of this prayer?

Or how, from his depression raised,
The Father on his Son had gazed;
Suffice it that the Son gave way,
Nor strove that passion to allay,
Nor did he turn aside to prove
His Brothers' wisdom or their love —
But calmly from the spot withdrew;
The like endeavours to renew,
Should e'er a kindlier time ensue.

CANTO FOURTH.

FROM cloudless ether looking down,
The Moon, this tranquil evening, sees
A Camp, and a beleaguered Town,
And Castle like a stately crown
On the steep rocks of winding Tees; —
And, southward far, with moors between,
Hill-tops, and floods, and forests green,
The bright Moon sees that valley small
Where Rylstone's old sequestered Hall
A venerable image yields
Of quiet to the neighbouring fields;
While from one pillared chimney breathes
The silver smoke, and mounts in wreaths.
— The courts are hushed; — for timely sleep
The Grey-hounds to their kennel creep;
The Peacock in the broad ash-tree
Aloft is roosted for the night,
He who in proud prosperity

Of colours manifold and bright
Walked round, affronting the day-light;
And higher still, above the bower
Where he is perched, from yon lone Tower
The Hall-clock in the clear moon-shine
With glittering finger points at nine.
— Ah! who could think that sadness here
Had any sway? or pain, or fear?
A soft and lulling sound is heard
Of streams inaudible by day;
The garden pool's dark surface, stirred
By the night insects in their play,
Breaks into dimples small and bright;
A thousand, thousand rings of light
That shape themselves and disappear
Almost as soon as seen:— and, lo!
Not distant far, the milk-white Doe:
The same fair Creature who was nigh
Feeding in tranquillity,
When Francis uttered to the Maid
His last words in the yew-tree shade;—
The same fair Creature, who hath found
Her way into forbidden ground;

Where now, within this spacious plot
For pleasure made, a goodly spot,
With lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades
Of trellis-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close-clipt foliage green and tall,
Converging walks, and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array, —
Beneath yon cypress spiring high,
With pine and cedar spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side,
In open moonlight doth she lie;
Happy as others of her kind,
That, far from human neighbourhood,
Range, unrestricted as the wind,
Through park, or chase, or savage wood.

But where at this still hour is she,
The consecrated Emily?
Even while I speak, behold the Maid
Emerging from the cedar shade
To open moonshine, where the Doe
Beneath the cypress-spire is laid;
Like a patch of April snow,

Upon a bed of herbage green,
Lingering in a woody glade,
Or behind a rocky screen;
Lonely relic! which, if seen
By the Shepherd, is passed by
With an inattentive eye.
— Nor more regard doth she bestow
Upon the uncomplaining Doe!

Yet the meek Creature was not free,
Erewhile, from some perplexity:
For thrice hath she approached, this day,
The thought-bewildered Emily;
Endeavouring, in her gentle way,
Some smile or look of love to gain, —
Encouragement to sport or play;
Attempts which by the unhappy Maid
Have all been slighted or gainsaid.
— O welcome to the viewless breeze!
'Tis fraught with acceptable feeling,
And instantaneous sympathies
Into the Sufferer's bosom stealing;

Ere she hath reached yon rustic Shed
Hung with late-flowering woodbine spread
Along the walls and overhead,
The fragrance of the breathing flowers
Revives a memory of those hours
When here, in this remote Alcove,
(While from the pendant woodbine came
Like odours, sweet as if the same)
A fondly anxious Mother strove
To teach her salutary fears
And mysteries above her years.
— Yes, she is soothed: — an Image faint —
And yet not faint — a presence bright
Returns to her; — 'tis that blessed Saint
Who with mild looks and language mild
Instructed here her darling Child,
While yet a prattler on the knee,
To worship in simplicity
The invisible God, and take for guide
The faith reformed and purified.

'Tis flown — the vision, and the sense
Of that beguiling influence!

"But oh! thou Angel from above,
Thou Spirit of maternal love,
That stood'st before my eyes, more clear
Than Ghosts are fabled to appear
Sent upon embassies of fear;
As thou thy presence hast to me
Vouchsafed — in radiant ministry
Descend on Francis: — through the air
Of this sad earth to him repair,
Speak to him with a voice, and say,
"That he must cast despair away!"

Then from within the embowered retreat
Where she had found a grateful seat
Perturbed she issues. — She will go;
Herself will follow to the war,
And clasp her Father's knees; — ah, no!
She meets the insuperable bar,
The injunction by her Brother laid;
His parting charge — but ill obeyed!
That interdicted all debate,
All prayer for this cause or for that;

All efforts that would turn aside
The headstrong current of their fate:
Her duty is to stand and wait;
In resignation to abide
The shock, AND FINALLY SECURE
O'ER PAIN AND GRIEF A TRIUMPH PURE.
— She knows, she feels it, and is cheared;
At least her present pangs are checked.
— And now an ancient Man appeared,
Approaching her with grave respect.
Down the smooth walk which then she trod
He paced along the silent sod,
And greeting her thus gently spake,
"An old Man's privilege I take;
Dark is the time — a woeful day!
Dear daughter of affliction, say
How can I serve you? point the way."

"Rights have you, and may well be bold:
You with my Father have grown old
In friendship; — go — from him — from me —
Strive to avert this misery.
This would I beg; but on my mind
A passive stillness is enjoined.

— If prudence offer help or aid,
On *you* is no restriction laid;
You not forbidden to recline
With hope upon the Will Divine."

" Hope" said the Sufferer's zealous Friend,
" Must not forsake us till the end. —
In Craven's wilds is many a den,
To shelter persecuted men:
Far under ground is many a cave,
Where they might lie as in the grave,
Until this storm hath ceased to rave;
Or let them cross the River Tweed,
And be at once from peril freed!"

— " Ah tempt me not!" she faintly sighed;
" I will not counsel nor exhort, —
With my condition satisfied;
But you at least, may make report
Of what befalls; — be this your task —
This may be done; — 'tis all I ask!"

She spake — and from the Lady's sight
The Sire, unconscious of his age,

Departed promptly as a Page
Bound on some errand of delight.
— The noble Francis — wise as brave,
Thought he, may have the skill to save:
With hopes in tenderness concealed,
Unarmed he followed to the field.
Him will I seek: the insurgent Powers
Are now besieging Barnard's Towers, —
" Grant that the Moon which shines this night
May guide them in a prudent flight!"

But quick the turns of chance and change,
And knowledge has a narrow range;
Whence idle fears, and needless pain,
And wishes blind, and efforts vain. —
Their flight the fair Moon may not see;
For, from mid-heaven, already she
Hath witnessed their captivity.
She saw the desperate assault
Upon that hostile Castle made; —
But dark and dismal is the Vault
Where Norton and his Sons are laid!
Disastrous issue! — He had said

" This night yon haughty Towers must yield,
Or we for ever quit the field.
— Neville is utterly dismayed,
For promise fails of Howard's aid;
And Dacre to our call replies
That he is unprepared to rise.
My heart is sick; — this weary pause
Must needs be fatal to the cause.
The breach is open — on the Wall,
This night, the Banner shall be planted!
— 'Twas done: — his Sons were with him — all; —
They belt him round with hearts undaunted;
And others follow — Sire and Son
Leap down into the court — " 'Tis won" —
They shout aloud — but Heaven decreed
Another close
To that brave deed
Which struck with terror friends and foes!
The friend shrinks back — the foe recoils
From Norton and his filial band;
But they, now caught within the toils,
Against a thousand cannot stand; —
The foe from numbers courage drew,
And overpowered that gallant few.

" A rescue for the Standard!" cried
The Father from within the walls;
But, see, the sacred Standard falls! —
Confusion through the Camp spread wide:
Some fled — and some their fears detained;
But ere the Moon had sunk to rest
In her pale chambers of the West,
Of that rash levy nought remained.

CANTO FIFTH.

High on a point of rugged ground,
Among the wastes of Rylstone Fell,
Above the loftiest ridge or mound
Where Foresters or Shepherds dwell,
An Edifice of warlike frame
Stands single (Norton Tower its name,)
It fronts all quarters, and looks round
O'er path and road, and plain and dell,
Dark moor, and gleam of pool and stream,
Upon a prospect without bound.

The summit of this bold ascent,
Though bleak and bare, and seldom free
As Pendle-hill or Pennygent
From wind, or frost, or vapours wet,
Had often heard the sound of glee
When there the youthful Nortons met,
To practise games and archery:

How proud and happy they! the crowd
Of Lookers-on how pleased and proud!
And from the scorching noon-tide sun,
From showers, or when the prize was won,
They to the Watch-tower did repair,
Commodious Pleasure-house! and there
Would mirth run round, with generous fare;
And the stern old Lord of Rylstone-hall,
He was the proudest of them all!

But now, his Child, with anguish pale,
Upon the height walks to and fro;
'Tis well that she hath heard the tale,—
Received the bitterness of woe:
For she *had* hoped, had hoped and feared,
Such rights did feeble nature claim;
And oft her steps had hither steered,
Though not unconscious of self-blame;
For she her Brother's charge revered,
His farewell words; and by the same,
Yea by her Brother's very name,
Had, in her solitude, been cheared.

She turned to him, who with his eye
Was watching her while on the height
She sate, or wandered restlessly,
O'erburdened by her sorrow's weight;
To him who this dire news had told,
And now beside the Mourner stood;
(That grey-haired Man of gentle blood,
Who with her Father had grown old
In friendship, rival Hunters they,
And fellow Warriors in their day)
To Rylstone he the tidings brought;
Then on this place the Maid had sought:
And told, as gently as could be,
The end of that sad Tragedy,
Which it had been his lot to see.

To him the Lady turned; "You said
That Francis lives, *he* is not dead?"

"Your noble Brother hath been spared,
To take his life they have not dared.
On him and on his high endeavour
The light of praise shall shine for ever!

Nor did he (such heaven's will) in vain
His solitary course maintain;
Not vainly struggled in the might
Of duty seeing with clear sight;
He was their comfort to the last,
Their joy till every pang was past.

"I witnessed when to York they came —
What, Lady, if their feet were tied!
They might deserve a good Man's blame;
But, marks of infamy and shame,
These were their triumph, these their pride.
'Lo Francis comes,' the people cried,
'A Prisoner once, but now set free!
'Tis well, for he the worst defied
For sake of natural Piety;
He rose not in this quarrel, he
His Father and his Brothers wooed,
Both for their own and Country's good,
To rest in peace — he did divide,
He parted from them; but at their side
Now walks in unanimity —
Then peace to cruelty and scorn,
While to the prison they are borne,
Peace, peace to all indignity!'

" And so in Prison were they laid —
Oh hear me, hear me, gentle Maid —
For I am come with power to bless,
By scattering gleams, through your distress,
Of a redeeming happiness.
Me did a reverent pity move
And privilege of ancient love;
And, in your service, I made bold —
And entrance gained to that strong-hold.

" Your Father gave me cordial greeting;
But to his purposes, that burned
Within him, instantly returned —
He was commanding and entreating,
And said, 'We need not stop, my Son!
But I will end what is begun;
'Tis matter which I do not fear
To entrust to any living ear.'
And so to Francis he renewed
His words, more calmly thus pursued.

" Might this our enterprize have sped,
Change wide and deep the Land had seen,
A renovation from the dead,
A spring-tide of immortal green:

The darksome Altars would have blazed
Like stars when clouds are rolled away;
Salvation to all eyes that gazed,
Once more the Rood had been upraised
To spread its arms, and stand for aye.
Then, then, had I survived to see
New life in Bolton Priory;
The voice restored, the eye of truth
Re-opened that inspired my youth;
To see her in her pomp arrayed;
This Banner (for such vow I made)
Should on the consecrated breast
Of that same Temple have found rest:
I would myself have hung it high,
Glad offering of glad victory!

"A shadow of such thought remains
To chear this sad and pensive time;
A solemn fancy yet sustains
One feeble Being — bids me climb
Even to the last — one effort more
To attest my Faith, if not restore.

"Hear then," said he, "while I impart,
My Son, the last wish of my heart.

— The Banner strive thou to regain;
And, if the endeavour be not vain,
Bear it — to whom if not to thee
Shall I this lonely thought consign? —
Bear it to Bolton Priory,
And lay it on Saint Mary's shrine, —
To wither in the sun and breeze
Mid those decaying Sanctities.
There let at least the gift be laid,
The testimony there displayed;
Bold proof that with no selfish aim,
But for lost Faith and Christ's dear name,
I helmeted a brow though white,
And took a place in all men's sight;
Yea offered up this beauteous Brood,
This fair unrivalled Brotherhood,
And turned away from thee, my Son!
And left — but be the rest unsaid,
The name untouched, the tear unshed, —
My wish is known and I have done:
Now promise, grant this one request,
This dying prayer, and be thou blest!"

"Then Francis answered fervently,
'If God so will, the same shall be.'"

" Immediately, this solemn word
Thus scarcely given, a noise was heard,
And Officers appeared in state
To lead the Prisoners to their fate.
They rose, oh! wherefore should I fear
To tell, or, Lady, you to hear?
They rose — embraces none were given —
They stood like trees when earth and heaven
Are calm; they knew each other's worth,
And reverently the Band went forth.
They met, when they had reached the door,
The Banner which a Soldier bore,
One marshalled thus with base intent
That he in scorn might go before,
And, holding up this monument,
Conduct them to their punishment;
So cruel Sussex, unrestrained
By human feeling, had ordained:
The unhappy Banner Francis saw,
And, with a look of calm command
Inspiring universal awe,
He took it from the Soldier's hand;
And all the People that were round
Confirmed the deed in peace profound.

— High transport did the Father shed
Upon his Son — and they were led,
Led on, and yielded up their breath,
Together died, a happy death!
But Francis, soon as he had braved
This insult, and the Banner saved,
That moment, from among the tide
Of the spectators occupied
In admiration or dismay,
Bore unobserved his Charge away."

These things, which thus had in the sight
And hearing passed of Him who stood
With Emily, on the Watch-tower height,
In Rylstone's woeful neighbourhood,
He told; and oftentimes with voice
Of power to comfort or rejoice;
For deepest sorrows that aspire,
Go high, no transport ever higher.
" Yet, yet in this affliction," said
The old Man to the silent Maid,
" Yet, Lady! heaven is good — the night
Shews yet a Star which is most bright;

Your Brother lives — he lives — is come
Perhaps already to his home;
Then let us leave this dreary place."
She yielded, and with gentle pace,
Though without one uplifted look,
To Rylstone-hall her way she took.—

CANTO SIXTH.

WHY comes not Francis? — Joyful chear
In that parental gratulation,
And glow of righteous indignation,
Went with him from the doleful City: —
He fled — yet in his flight could hear
The death-sound of the Minster-bell;
That sullen stroke pronounced farewell
To Marmaduke, cut off from pity!
To Ambrose that! and then a knell
For him, the sweet half-opened Flower!
For all — all dying in one hour!
— Why comes not Francis? Thoughts of love
Should bear him to his Sister dear
With motion fleet as winged Dove;
Yea, like a heavenly Messenger,
An Angel-guest, should he appear.
Why comes he not? — for westward fast
Along the plain of York he past;

The Banner-staff was in his hand,
The Imagery concealed from sight,
And cross the expanse, in open flight,
Reckless of what impels or leads,
Unchecked he hurries on;—nor heeds
The sorrow of the Villages;
From the triumphant cruelties
Of vengeful military force,
And punishment without remorse,
Unchecked he journies—under law
Of inward occupation strong;
And the first object which he saw,
With conscious sight, as he swept along,—
It was the banner in his hand!
He felt, and made a sudden stand.

He looked about like one betrayed:
What hath he done? what promise made?
Oh weak, weak moment! to what end
Can such a vain oblation tend,
And he the Bearer?—Can he go
Carrying this instrument of woe,
And find, find any where, a right
To excuse him in his Country's sight?

No, will not all Men deem the change
A downward course, perverse and strange?
Here is it, — but how, when? must she,
The unoffending Emily,
Again this piteous object see?

Such conflict long did he maintain
Within himself, and found no rest;
Calm liberty he could not gain;
And yet the service was unblest.
His own life into danger brought
By this sad burden — even that thought,
Exciting self-suspicion strong,
Swayed the brave man to his wrong:
And how, unless it were the sense
Of all disposing Providence,
Its will intelligibly shewn,
Finds he the banner in his hand,
Without a thought to such intent,
Or conscious effort of his own?
And no obstruction to prevent
His Father's wish and last command!
And, thus beset, he heaved a sigh;
Remembering his own prophecy

Of utter desolation, made
To Emily in the yew-tree shade:
He sighed, submitting to the power,
The might of that prophetic hour.
" No choice is left, the deed is mine —
Dead are they, dead! — and I will go,
And, for their sakes, come weal or woe,
Will lay the Relic on the shrine."

So forward with a steady will
He went, and traversed plain and hill;
And up the vale of Wharf his way
Pursued; — and, on the second day,
He reached a summit whence his eyes
Could see the Tower of Bolton rise.
There Francis for a moment's space
Made halt — but hark! a noise behind
Of horsemen at an eager pace!
He heard, and with misgiving mind.
— 'Tis Sir George Bowes who leads the Band:
They come, by cruel Sussex sent;
Who, when the Nortons from the hand
Of Death had drunk their punishment,

Bethought him, angry and ashamed,
How Francis had the Banner claimed,
And with that charge had disappeared;
By all the Standers-by revered.
His whole bold carriage (which had quelled
Thus far the Opposer, and repelled
All censure, enterprise so bright
That even bad men had vainly striven
Against that overcoming light)
Was then reviewed, and prompt word given,
That to what place soever fled
He should be seized, alive or dead.

The troop of horse have gained the height
Where Francis stood in open sight.
They hem him round — Beheld the proof,
Behold the Ensign in his hand!
He did not arm, he walked aloof!
For why? — to save his Father's Land; —
Worst Traitor of them all is he,
A Traitor dark and cowardly!"

" I am no Traitor," Francis said,
" Though this unhappy freight I bear;
It weakens me, my heart hath bled
Till it is weak — but you beware,
Nor do a suffering Spirit wrong,
Whose self-reproaches are too strong!"
At this he from the beaten road
Retreated towards a brake of thorn,
Which like a place of 'vantage shewed;
And there stood bravely, though forlorn.
In self-defence with warlike brow
He stood, — nor weaponless was now;
He from a Soldier's hand had snatched
A spear, — and with his eyes he watched
Their motions, turning round and round: —
His weaker hand the Banner held;
And straight by savage zeal impelled
Forth rushed a Pikeman, as if he,
Not without harsh indignity,
Would seize the same: — instinctively —
To smite the Offender — with his lance
Did Francis from the brake advance;
But, from behind, a treacherous wound
Unfeeling, brought him to the ground,

A mortal stroke: — oh, grief to tell!
Thus, thus, the noble Francis fell:
There did he lie of breath forsaken;
The Banner from his grasp was taken,
And borne exultingly away;
And the Body was left on the ground where it lay.

Two days, as many nights, he slept
Alone, unnoticed, and unwept;
For at that time distress and fear
Possessed the Country far and near;
The third day, One, who chanced to pass,
Beheld him stretched upon the grass.
A gentle Forester was he,
And of the Norton Tenantry;
And he had heard that by a Train
Of Horsemen Francis had been slain.
Much was he troubled — for the Man
Hath recognized his pallid face;
And to the nearest Huts he ran,
And called the People to the place.
— How desolate is Rylstone-hall!
Such was the instant thought of all;

And if the lonely Lady there
Should be, this sight she cannot bear!
Such thought the Forester expressed,
And all were swayed, and deemed it best
That, if the Priest should yield assent
And join himself to their intent,
Then, they, for Christian pity's sake,
In holy ground a grave would make;
That straightway buried he should be
In the Church-yard of the Priory.

Apart, some little space, was made
The grave where Francis must be laid.
In no confusion or neglect
This did they, — but in pure respect
That he was born of gentle Blood;
And that there was no neighbourhood
Of kindred for him in that ground:
So to the Church-yard they are bound,
Bearing the Body on a bier
In decency and humble chear;
And psalms are sung with holy sound.

But Emily hath raised her head,
And is again disquieted;
She must behold! — so many gone,
Where is the solitary One?
And forth from Rylstone-hall stepped she, —
To seek her Brother forth she went
And tremblingly her course she bent
Tow'rds Bolton's ruined Priory.
She comes, and in the Vale hath heard
The Funeral dirge; — she sees the Knot
Of people, sees them in one spot —
And darting like a wounded Bird
She reached the grave, and with her breast
Upon the ground received the rest, —
The consummation, the whole ruth
And sorrow of this final truth!

CANTO SEVENTH.

THOU Spirit, whose angelic hand
Was to the Harp a strong command,
Called the submissive strings to wake
In glory for this Maiden's sake,
Say, Spirit! whither hath she fled
To hide her poor afflicted head?
What mighty forest in its gloom
Enfolds her? — is a rifted tomb
Within the wilderness her seat?
Some island which the wild waves beat,
Is that the Sufferer's last retreat?
Or some aspiring rock, that shrouds
Its perilous front in mists and clouds?
High-climbing rock — low sunless dale —
Sea — desart — what do these avail?
Oh take her anguish and her fears
Into a deep recess of years!

'Tis done; — despoil and desolation
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown;
The walks and pools neglect hath sown
With weeds, the bowers are overthrown,
Or have given way to slow mutation,
While, in their ancient habitation
The Norton name hath been unknown:
The lordly Mansion of its pride
Is stripped; the ravage hath spread wide
Through park and field, a perishing
That mocks the gladness of the Spring!
And with this silent gloom agreeing
There is a joyless human Being,
Of aspect such as if the waste
Were under her dominion placed:
Upon a primrose bank, her throne
Of quietness, she sits alone;
There seated, may this Maid be seen,
Among the ruins of a wood,
Erewhile a covert bright and green,
And where full many a brave Tree stood;
That used to spread its boughs, and ring
With the sweet Bird's carolling.

Behold her, like a Virgin Queen,
Neglecting in imperial state
These outward images of fate,
And carrying inward a serene
And perfect sway, through many a thought
Of chance and change, that hath been brought
To the subjection of a holy,
Though stern and rigorous, melancholy!
The like authority, with grace
Of awfulness, is in her face, —
There hath she fixed it; yet it seems
To o'ershadow by no native right
That face, which cannot lose the gleams,
Lose utterly the tender gleams
Of gentleness and meek delight
And loving-kindness ever bright:
Such is her sovereign mien; — her dress
(A vest, with woollen cincture tied,
A hood of mountain-wool undyed)
Is homely, — fashioned to express
A wandering Pilgrim's humbleness.

And she *hath* wandered, long and far,
Beneath the light of sun and star;

Hath roamed in trouble and in grief,
Driven forward like a withered leaf,
Yea like a Ship at Random blown
To distant places and unknown.
But now she dares to seek a haven
Among her native wilds of Craven;
Hath seen again her Father's Roof,
And put her fortitude to proof;
The mighty sorrow has been borne,
And she is thoroughly forlorn:
Her soul doth in itself stand fast,
Sustained by memory of the past
And strength of Reason; held above
The infirmities of mortal love;
Undaunted, lofty, calm, and stable,
And awfully impenetrable.

And so — beneath a mouldered tree,
A self-surviving leafless Oak,
By unregarded age from stroke
Of ravage saved — sate Emily.
There did she rest, with head reclined,
Herself most like a stately Flower,

(Such have I seen) whom chance of birth
Hath separated from its kind,
To live and die in a shady bower,
Single on the gladsome earth.

When, with a noise like distant thunder,
A troop of Deer came sweeping by;
And, suddenly, behold a wonder!
For, of that band of rushing Deer,
A single One in mid career
Hath stopped, and fixed its large full eye
Upon the Lady Emily,
A Doe most beautiful, clear-white,
A radiant Creature, silver-bright!

Thus checked, a little while it stayed;
A little thoughtful pause it made;
And then advanced with stealth-like pace,
Drew softly near her — and more near,
Stopped once again; — but, as no trace
Was found of any thing to fear,
Even to her feet the Creature came,
And laid its head upon her knee,
And looked into the Lady's face,

A look of pure benignity,
And fond unclouded memory.
It is, thought Emily, the same,
The very Doe of other years!
The pleading look the Lady viewed,
And, by her gushing thoughts subdued,
She melted into tears —
A flood of tears, that flowed apace
Upon the happy Creature's face.

Oh, moment ever blest! O Pair!
Beloved of heaven, heaven's choicest care
This was for you a precious greeting, —
For both a bounteous, fruitful meeting.
Joined are they, and the sylvan Doe
Can she depart? can she forego
The Lady, once her playful Peer,
And now her sainted Mistress dear?
And will not Emily receive
This lovely Chronicler of things
Long past, delights and sorrowings?
Lone Sufferer! will not she believe
The promise in that speaking face,
And take this gift of Heaven with grace?

That day, the first of a re-union
Which was to teem with high communion,
That day of balmy April weather,
They tarried in the wood together.
And when, ere fall of evening-dew
She from this sylvan haunt withdrew,
The White Doe tracked with faithful pace
The Lady to her Dwelling-place;
That nook where, on paternal ground,
A habitation she had found,
The Master of whose humble board
Once owned her Father for his Lord;
A Hut, by tufted Trees defended,
Where Rylstone Brook with Wharf is blended.

When Emily by morning light
Went forth, the Doe was there in sight.
She shrunk: — with one frail shock of pain,
Received and followed by a prayer,
Did she behold — saw once again;
Shun will she not, she feels, will bear; —
But, wheresoever she looked round,
All now was trouble-haunted ground.

So doth the Sufferer deem it good
Even once again this neighbourhood
To leave. — Unwooed, yet unforbidden,
The White Doe followed up the Vale,
Up to another Cottage — hidden
In the deep fork of Amerdale;
And there may Emily restore
Herself, in spots unseen before —
Why tell of mossy rock, or tree,
By lurking Dernbrook's pathless side,
Haunts of a strengthening amity
That calmed her, cheared, and fortified?
For she hath ventured now to read
Of time, and place, and thought, and deed,
Endless history that lies
In her silent Follower's eyes!
Who with a power like human Reason
Discerns the favourable season,
Skilled to approach or to retire, —
From looks conceiving her desire,
From look, deportment, voice or mien,
That vary to the heart within.
If she too passionately writhed
Her arms, or over-deeply breathed,

Walked quick or slowly, every mood
In its degree was understood;
Then well may their accord be true,
And kindly intercourse ensue.
—Oh! surely 'twas a gentle rouzing
When she by sudden glimpse espied
The White Doe on the mountain browzing,
Or in the meadow wandered wide!
How pleased, when down the Straggler sank
Beside her, on some sunny bank!
How soothed, when in thick bower enclosed,
They like a nested Pair reposed!
Fair Vision! when it crossed the Maid
Within some rocky cavern laid,
The dark cave's portal gliding by,
White as the whitest cloud on high,
Floating through the azure sky.
—What now is left for pain or fear?
That Presence, dearer and more dear,
Did now a very gladness yield
At morning to the dewy field,
While they side by side were straying,
And the Shepherd's pipe was playing;

And with a deeper peace endued
The hour of moonlight solitude.

With her Companion, in such frame
Of mind, to Rylstone back she came,—
And, wandering through the wasted groves,
Received the memory of old Loves,
Undisturbed and undistrest,
Into a soul which now was blest
With a soft spring-day of holy,
Mild, delicious, melancholy:
Not sunless gloom or unenlightened,
But by tender fancies brightened,

When the Bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music — "God us ayde!"
That was the sound they seemed to speak;
Inscriptive legend, which I ween
May on those holy Bells be seen,
That legend and her Gransire's name;
And oftentimes the Lady meek
Had in her Childhood read the same,

Words which she slighted at that day;
But now, when such sad change was wrought,
And of that lonely name she thought,
The Bells of Rylstone seemed to say,
While she sate listening in the shade,
With vocal music, "God us ayde!"
And all the Hills were glad to bear
Their part in this effectual prayer.

Nor lacked she Reason's firmest power;
But with the White Doe at her side
Up doth she climb to Norton Tower,
And thence looks round her far and wide.
Her fate there measures, — all is stilled, —
The feeble hath subdued her heart;
Behold the prophecy fulfilled,
Fulfilled, and she sustains her part!
But here her Brother's words have failed, —
Here hath a milder doom prevailed;
That she, of him and all bereft,
Hath yet this faithful Partner left, —
This single Creature that disproves
His words, remains for her, and loves.

If tears are shed, they do not fall
For loss of him, for one or all;
Yet, sometimes, sometimes doth she weep
Moved gently in her soul's soft sleep;
A few tears down her cheek descend
For this her last and living Friend.

Bless, tender Hearts, their mutual lot,
And bless for both this savage spot!
Which Emily doth sacred hold
For reasons dear and manifold —
Here hath she, here before her sight,
Close to the summit of this height,
The grassy rock-encircled Pound
In which the Creature first was found.
So beautiful the spotless Thrall,
(A lovely Youngling white as foam,)
That it was brought to Rylstone-hall;
Her youngest Brother led it home,
The youngest, then a lusty Boy,
Brought home the prize — and with what joy!

But most to Bolton's sacred Pile,
On favouring nights, she loved to go:
There ranged through cloister, court, and aisle,
Attended by the soft-paced Doe;
Nor did she fear in still moonshine
To look upon Saint Mary's shrine;
Nor on the lonely turf that showed
Where Francis slept in his last abode.
For that she came; there oft and long
She sate in meditation strong:
And, when she from the abyss returned
Of thought, she neither shrunk nor mourned;
Was happy that she lived to greet
Her mute Companion as it lay
In love and pity at her feet;
How happy in its turn to meet
That recognition! the mild glance
Beamed from that gracious countenance;
Communication, like the ray
Of a new morning, to the nature
And prospects of the inferior Creature!

A mortal Song we frame, by dower
Encouraged of celestial power;

Power which the viewless Spirit shed
By whom we were first visited;
Whose voice we heard, whose hand and wings
Swept like a breeze the conscious strings,
When, left in solitude, erewhile
We stood before this ruined Pile,
And, quitting unsubstantial dreams,
Sang in this Presence kindred themes;
Distress and desolation spread
Through human hearts, and pleasure dead, —
Dead — but to live again on Earth,
A second and yet nobler birth;
Dire overthrow, and yet how high
The re-ascent in sanctity!
From fair to fairer; day by day
A more divine and loftier way!
Even such this blessed Pilgrim trod,
By sorrow lifted tow'rds her God;
Uplifted to the purest sky
Of undisturbed mortality.
Her own thoughts loved she; and could bend
A dear look to her lowly Friend, —
There stopped; — her thirst was satisfied
With what this innocent spring supplied —

Her sanction inwardly she bore,
And stood apart from human cares:
But to the world returned no more,
Although with no unwilling mind
Help did she give at need, and joined
The Wharfdale Peasants in their prayers.
At length, thus faintly, faintly tied
To earth, she was set free, and died.
Thy soul, exalted Emily,
Maid of the blasted family,
Rose to the God from whom it came!
—In Rylstone Church her mortal frame
Was buried by her Mother's side.

Most glorious sunset! — and a ray
Survives — the twilight of this day;
In that fair Creature whom the fields
Support, and whom the forest shields;
Who, having filled a holy place,
Partakes in her degree heaven's grace;
And bears a memory and a mind
Raised far above the law of kind;
Haunting the spots with lonely chear
Which her dear Mistress once held dear:

Loves most what Emily loved most —
The enclosure of this Church-yard ground;
Here wanders like a gliding Ghost,
And every Sabbath here is found;
Comes with the People when the Bells
Are heard among the moorland dells,
Finds entrance through yon arch, where way
Lies open on the Sabbath-day;
Here walks amid the mournful waste
Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
And floors encumbered with rich show
Of fret-work imagery laid low;
Paces softly, or makes halt,
By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault,
By plate of monumental brass
Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
And sculptured Forms of Warriors brave;
But chiefly by that single grave,
That one sequestered hillock green,
The pensive Visitant is seen.
There doth the gentle Creature lie
With those adversities unmoved;
Calm Spectacle, by earth and sky
In their benignity approved!

And aye, methinks, this hoary Pile,
Subdued by outrage and decay,
Looks down upon her with a smile,
A gracious smile, that seems to say,
" Thou, thou art not a Child of Time,
But Daughter of the Eternal Prime!"

NOTES.

The Poem of the White Doe of Rylstone is founded on a local tradition, and on the Ballad in Percy's Collection, entitled "The Rising of the North." The tradition is as follows: "About this time," not long after the Dissolution, "a White Doe, say the aged people of the neighbourhood, long continued to make a weekly pilgrimage from Rylstone over the fells of Bolton, and was constantly found in the Abbey Church-yard during divine service; after the close of which she returned home as regularly as the rest of the congregation." — Dr. Whitaker's *History of the Deanery of Craven.* — Rylstone was the property and residence of the Nortons, distinguished in that ill-advised and unfortunate Insurrection, which led me to connect with this tradition the principal circumstances of their fate, as recorded in the Ballad.

"Bolton Priory," says Dr. Whitaker in his excellent book, the History and Antiquities of the Deanery of Craven, stands upon a beautiful curvature of the Wharf, on a level sufficiently elevated to protect it from inun-

dations, and low enough for every purpose of picturesque effect.

" Opposite to the East window of the Priory Church, the river washes the foot of a rock nearly perpendicular, and of the richest purple, where several of the mineral beds, which break out, instead of maintaining their usual inclination to the horizon, are twisted by some inconceivable process, into undulating and spiral lines. To the South all is soft and delicious; the eye reposes upon a few rich pastures, a moderate reach of the river, sufficiently tranquil to form a mirror to the sun, and the bounding hills beyond, neither too near nor too lofty to exclude, even in winter, any portion of his rays.

" But, after all, the glories of Bolton are on the North. Whatever the most fastidious taste could require to constitute a perfect landscape is not only found here, but in its proper place. In front, and immediately under the eye, is a smooth expanse of park-like enclosure, spotted with native elm, ash, &c. of the finest growth: on the right a skirting oak wood, with jutting points of grey rock; on the left a rising copse. Still forward are seen the aged groves of Bolton Park, the growth of centuries; and farther yet, the barren and rocky distances of Simonseat and Barden Fell contrasted with the warmth, fertility, and luxuriant foliage of the valley below.

" About half a mile above Bolton the valley closes, and either side of the Wharf is overhung by solemn woods, from which huge perpendicular masses of grey rock jut out at intervals.

"This sequestered scene was almost inaccessible till of late, that ridings have been cut on both sides of the River, and the most interesting points laid open by judicious thinnings in the woods. Here a tributary stream rushes from a waterfall, and bursts through a woody glen to mingle its waters with the Wharf: there the Wharf itself is nearly lost in a deep cleft in the rock, and next becomes a horned flood enclosing a woody island — sometimes it reposes for a moment, and then resumes its native character, lively, irregular, and impetuous.

"The cleft mentioned above is the tremendous STRID. This chasm, being incapable of receiving the winter floods, has formed, on either side, a broad strand of naked grit-stone full of rock-basons, or 'pots of the Linn,' which bear witness to the restless impetuosity of so many Northern torrents. But, if here Wharf is lost to the eye, it amply repays another sense by its deep and solemn roar, like 'the Voice of the angry Spirit of the Waters,' heard far above and beneath, amidst the silence of the surrounding woods.

"The terminating object of the landscape is the remains of Barden Tower, interesting from their form and situation, and still more so from the recollections which they excite."

From Bolton's old monastic Tower. — P. 9.

It is to be regretted that at the present day Bolton Abbey wants this ornament: but the Poem, according to the imagination of the Poet, is composed in Queen Eli-

zabeth's time. "Formerly," says Dr. Whitaker, "over the Transept was a tower. This is proved not only from the mention of bells at the Dissolution, when they could have had no other place, but from the pointed roof of the choir, which must have terminated westward, in some building of superior height to the ridge."

A rural Chapel, neatly drest. — P. 10.

"The Nave of the Church having been reserved at the Dissolution, for the use of the Saxon Cure, is still a parochial Chapel; and, at this day, is as well kept as the neatest English Cathedral."

Who sate in the shade of the Prior's Oak. — *Ibid.*

"At a small distance from the great gateway stood the Prior's Oak, which was felled about the year 1720, and sold for 70*l.* According to the price of wood at that time, it could scarcely have contained less than 1400 feet of timber."

When Lady Aäliza mourned. — P. 19.

The detail of this tradition may be found in Dr. Whitaker's book, and in a Poem to be found in the Fourth Volume of this Collection, The Force of Prayer, &c.

Pass, pass who will, yon chantry door. — P. 20.

"At the East end of the North aisle of Bolton Priory Church is a chantry belonging to Bethmesly Hall, and a vault, where, according to tradition, the Claphams"

(who inherited this estate, by the female line from the Mauliverers) "were interred upright." John de Clapham, of whom this ferocious act is recorded, was a name of great note in his time; "he was a vehement partisan of the House of Lancaster, in whom the spirit of his chieftains, the Cliffords seemed to survive."

Who loved the Shepherd Lord to meet.—P. 21.

In the second volume of these Poems, will be found one, entitled, "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle, upon the Restoration of Lord Clifford the Shepherd to the Estates and Honours of his Ancestors." To that Poem is annexed an account of this personage, chiefly extracted from Burn's and Nicholson's History of Cumberland and Westmoreland. It gives me pleasure to add these further particulars concerning him from Dr. Whitaker, who says, "he retired to the solitude of Barden, where he seems to have enlarged the tower out of a common keeper's lodge, and where he found a retreat equally favourable to taste, to instruction, and to devotion. The narrow limits of his residence shew that he had learned to despise the pomp of greatness, and that a small train of servants could suffice him, who had lived to the age of thirty a servant himself. I think this nobleman resided here almost entirely when in Yorkshire, for all his charters which I have seen are dated at Barden.

"His early habits, and the want of those artificial measures of time which even shepherds now possess, had

given him a turn for observing the motions of the heavenly bodies, and, having purchased such an apparatus as could then be procured, he amused and informed himself by those pursuits, with the aid of the Canons of Bolton, some of whom are said to have been well versed in what was then known of the science.

"I suspect this nobleman to have been sometimes occupied in a more visionary pursuit, and probably in the same company.

"For, from the family evidences, I have met with two MSS. on the subject of Alchemy, which, from the character, spelling, &c., may almost certainly be referred to the reign of Henry the Seventh. If these were originally deposited with the MSS. of the Cliffords, it might have been for the use of this nobleman. If they were brought from Bolton at the Dissolution, they must have been the work of those Canons whom he almost exclusively conversed with.

"In these peaceful employments Lord Clifford spent the whole reign of Henry the Seventh, and the first years of his son. But in the year 1513, when almost sixty years old, he was appointed to a principal command over the army which fought at Flodden, and shewed that the military genius of the family had neither been chilled in him by age, nor extinguished by habits of peace.

"He survived the battle of Flodden ten years, and died April 23d, 1523, aged about 70. I shall endeavour to appropriate to him a tomb, vault, and chantry, in the

choir of the church of Bolton, as I should be sorry to believe that he was deposited when dead, at a distance from the place which in his life-time he loved so well.

"By his last will he appointed his body to be interred at Shap if he died in Westmoreland; or at Bolton if he died in Yorkshire."

With respect to the Canons of Bolton, Dr. Whitaker shews from MSS. that not only alchemy but astronomy was a favourite pursuit with them.

Ye Watchmen upon Brancepeth Towers. — P. 36.

Brancepeth Castle stands near the river Were, a few miles from the city of Durham. It formerly belonged to the Nevilles, Earls of Westmoreland. See Dr. Percy's account.

Of mitred Thurston, what a Host
He conquered! — P. 47.

See the Historians for the account of this memorable battle, usually denominated the Battle of the Standard.

In that other day of Neville's Cross. — Ibid.

"In the night before the battle of Durham was strucken and begun, the 17th day of October, *anno* 1346, there did appear to John Fosser, then Prior of the abbey of Durham, commanding him to take the holy Corporax-cloth, wherewith St. Cuthbert did cover the chalice when he used to say mass, and to put the same holy relique like to a banner-cloth upon the point of a spear, and the next

morning to go and repair to a place on the west side of the city of Durham, called the Red Hills, where the Maid's Bower wont to be, and there to remain and abide till the end of the battle. To which vision, the Prior obeying, and taking the same for a revelation of God's grace and mercy by the mediation of holy St. Cuthbert, did accordingly the next morning, with the monks of the said abbey, repair to the said Red Hills, and there most devoutly humbling and prostrating themselves in prayer for the victory in the said battle: (a great multitude of the Scots running and pressing by them, with intention to have spoiled them, yet had no power to commit any violence under such holy persons, so occupied in prayer, being protected and defended by the mighty Providence of Almighty God, and by the mediation of Holy St. Cuthbert, and the presence of the holy relique.) And, after many conflicts and warlike exploits there had and done between the English men and the King of Scots and his company, the said battle ended, and the victory was obtained, to the great overthrow and confusion of the Scots, their enemies: And then the said Prior and monks, accompanied with Ralph Lord Nevil, and John Nevil his son, and the Lord Percy, and many other nobles of England, returned home and went to the abbey church, there joining in hearty prayer and thanksgiving to God and holy St. Cuthbert for the victory atchieved that day."

This battle was afterwards called the Battle of Neville's Cross from the following circumstance:—

" On the west side of the city of Durham, where two

roads pass each other, a most notable, famous, and goodly cross of stone-work was erected, and set up to the honour of God for the victory there obtained in the field of battle, and known by the name of Nevil's Cross, and built at the sole cost of the Lord Ralph Nevil, one of the most excellent and chief persons in the said battle." The Relique of St. Cuthbert afterwards became of great importance in military events. For soon after this battle, says the same author, "The prior caused a goodly and sumptuous banner to be made, (which is then described at great length,) and in the midst of the same banner-cloth was the said holy relique and corporax-cloth enclosed, &c. &c. and so sumptuously finished, and absolutely perfected, this banner was dedicated to holy St. Cuthbert, of intent and purpose, that for the future it should be carried to any battle, as occasion should serve; and was never carried and shewed at any battle but by the especial grace of God Almighty, and the mediation of holy St. Cuthbert, it brought home victory; which banner-cloth, after the dissolution of the abbey, fell into the possession of Dean WHITTINGHAM, whose wife was called KATHARINE, being a French woman, (as is most credibly reported by eye-witnesses,) did most injuriously burn the same in her fire, to the open contempt and disgrace of all ancient and goodly reliques."—Extracted from a book entitled, "Durham Cathedral, as it stood before the Dissolution of the Monastery." It appears, from the old metrical History, that the above-mentioned banner was carried by the Earl of Surry to Flodden Field.

An Edifice of warlike frame
Stands single (Norton Tower its name.) — P. 64.

It is so called to this day, and is thus described by Dr. Whitaker. "Rylstone Fell yet exhibits a monument of the old warfare between the Nortons and Cliffords. On a point of very high ground, commanding an immense prospect, and protected by two deep ravines, are the remains of a square tower, expressly said by Dodsworth to have been built by Richard Norton. The walls are of strong grout-work, about four feet thick. It seems to have been three stories high. Breaches have been industriously made in all the sides, almost to the ground, to render it untenable.

"But Norton Tower was probably a sort of pleasure-house in summer, as there are, adjoining to it, several large mounds, (two of them are pretty entire,) of which no other account can be given than that they were butts for large companies of archers.

"The place is savagely wild, and admirably adapted to the uses of a watch-tower."

——— *despoil and desolatio*
O'er Rylstone's fair domain have blown. — P. 84.

"After the attainder of Richard Norton, his estates were forfeited to the crown, where they remained till the 2d or 3d of James; they were then granted to Francis Earl of Cumberland." From an accurate survey made at that time, several particulars have been extracted by

Dr. W. It appears that the mansion-house was then in decay. Immediately adjoining is a close, called the Vivery, so called undoubtedly from the French Vivier, or modern Latin Viverium; for there are near the house large remains of a pleasure-ground, such as were introduced in the earlier part of Elizabeth's time, with topiary works, fish-ponds, an island, &c. The whole township was ranged by an hundred and thirty red deer, the property of the Lord, which, together with the wood, had, after the attainder of Mr. Norton, been committed to Sir Stephen Tempest. The wood, it seems, had been abandoned to depredations, before which time it appears that the neighbourhood must have exhibited a forest-like and sylvan scene. In this survey, among the old tenants, is mentioned one Richard Kitchen, butler to Mr. Norton, who rose in rebellion with his master, and was executed at Ripon."

In the deep fork of Amerdale. — P. 90.

"At the extremity of the parish of Burnsal, the valley of Wharf forks off into two great branches, one of which retains the name of Wharfdale to the source of the river; the other is usually called Littondale, but more anciently and properly Amerdale. Dern-brook, which runs along an obscure valley from the N.W. is derived from a Teutonic word, signifying concealment." — Dr. WHITAKER.

When the Bells of Rylstone played
Their Sabbath music — "God us ayde." — P. 92.

On one of the bells of Rylstone church, which seems coeval with the building of the tower, is this cypher, I. N. for John Norton, and the motto, "God us ayde."

The grassy rock-encircled Pound. — P. 94.

Which is thus described by Dr. Whitaker: — "On the plain summit of the hill are the foundations of a strong wall, stretching from the S.W. to the N.E. corner of the tower, and to the edge of a very deep glen. From this glen, a ditch, several hundred yards long, runs south to another deep and rugged ravine. On the N. and W. where the banks are very steep, no wall or mound is discoverable, paling being the only fence that could stand on such ground.

From the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, it appears that such pounds for deer, sheep, &c. were far from being uncommon in the south of Scotland. The principle of them was something like that of a wire mouse-trap. On the declivity of a steep hill, the bottom and sides of which were fenced so as to be impassable, a wall was constructed nearly level with the surface on the outside, yet so high within, that without wings it was impossible to escape in the opposite direction. Care was probably taken that these enclosures should contain better feed than the neighbouring parks or forests; and whoever is acquainted with the habits of these sequacious animals, will easily

conceive, that if the leader was once tempted to descend into the snare, an herd would follow."

I cannot conclude without recommending to the notice of all lovers of beautiful scenery — Bolton Abbey and its neighbourhood. This enchanting spot belongs to the Duke of Devonshire; and the superintendance of it has for some years been entrusted to the Rev. William Carr, who has most skilfully opened out its features; and in whatever he has added, has done justice to the place by working with an invisible hand of art in the very spirit of nature.

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

(FROM CHAUCER.)

In the following Poem I have allowed myself no further deviations from the original than was necessary for the fluent reading, and instant understanding, of the Author: so much however is the language altered since Chaucer's time, especially in pronunciation, that much was to be removed, and its place supplied with as little incongruity as possible. The ancient accent has been retained in a few conjunctions, as in alsō *and* alwāy, *from a conviction that such sprinklings of antiquity would be admitted, by persons of taste, to have a graceful accordance with the subject.*

THE PRIORESS'S TALE.

" Call up him who left half told
The story of Cambuscan bold."

O Lord, our Lord! how wondrously (quoth she)
Thy name in this large world is spread abroad!
For not alone by men of dignity
Thy worship is performed and precious laud;
But by the mouths of children, gracious God!
Thy goodness is set forth, they when they lie
Upon the breast thy name do glorify.

Wherefore in praise, the worthiest that I may,
Jesu! of thee, and the white Lily-flower
Which did thee bear, and is a maid for aye,
To tell a story I will use my power;
Not that I may increase her honour's dower,
For she herself is honour, and the root
Of goodness, next her Son our soul's best boot.

O Mother Maid! O Maid and Mother free!
O bush unburnt! burning in Moses' sight!
That down didst ravish from the Deity,
Through humbleness, the spirit that did alight
Upon thy heart, whence, through that glory's might,
Conceived was the Father's sapience,
Help me to tell it in thy reverence!

Lady, thy goodness, thy magnificence,
Thy virtue, and thy great humility,
Surpass all science and all utterance;
For sometimes, Lady! ere men pray to thee
Thou go'st before in thy benignity,
The light to us vouchsafing of thy prayer,
To be our guide unto thy Son so dear.

My knowledge is so weak, O blissful Queen!
To tell abroad thy mighty worthiness,
That I the weight of it may not sustain;
But as a child of twelvemonths old or less,
That laboureth his language to express,
Even so fare I; and therefore, I thee pray,
Guide thou my song which I of thee shall say.

There was in Asia, in a mighty town,
'Mong Christian folk, a street where Jews might be;
Assigned to them and given them for their own
By a great Lord, for gain and usury,
Hateful to Christ and to his company;
And through this street who list might ride and wend;
Free was it, and unbarred at either end.

A little school of Christian people stood
Down at the farther end, in which there were
A nest of children come of Christian blood,
That learned in that school from year to year
Such sort of doctrine as men used there,
That is to say, to sing and read also
As little children in their childhood do.

Among these children was a widow's son,
A little scholar, scarcely seven years old,
Who day by day unto this school hath gone,
And eke, when he the image did behold
Of Jesu's Mother, as he had been told,
This Child was wont to kneel adown and say
Ave Marie, as he goeth by the way.

This Widow thus her little Son hath taught
Our blissful lady, Jesu's Mother dear,
To worship aye, and he forgat it not,
For simple infant hath a ready ear.
Sweet is the holiness of youth: and hence,
Calling to mind this matter when I may,
Saint Nicholas in my presence standeth aye,
For he so young to Christ did reverence.

This little Child, while in the school he sate
His primer conning with an earnest cheer,
The whilst the rest their anthem-book repeat
The *Alma Redemptoris* did he hear;
And as he durst he drew him near and near,
And hearkened to the words and to the note,
'Till the first verse he learned it all by rote.

This Latin knew he nothing what it said
For he too tender was of age to know;
But to his comrade he repaired, and prayed
That he the meaning of this song would show,
And unto him declare why men sing so;
This oftentimes, that he might be at ease,
This child did him beseech on his bare knees.

His Schoolfellow, who elder was than he,
Answered him thus: — "This song, I have heard say,
Was fashioned for our blissful Lady free;
Her to salute, and also her to pray
To be our help upon our dying day.
If there is more in this I know it not;
Song do I learn, — small grammar I have got.

"And is this song fashioned in reverence
Of Jesu's Mother?" said this Innocent,
"Now, certes, I will use my diligence
To con it all ere Christmas-tide be spent;
Although I for my Primer shall be shent,
And shall be beaten three times in an hour,
Our Lady I will praise with all my power."

His Schoolfellow, whom he had so besought,
As they went homeward taught him privily;
And then he sang it well and fearlessly,
From word to word according to the note:
Twice in a day it passed through his throat;
Homeward and schoolward whensoe'er he went,
On Jesu's Mother fixed was his intent.

Through all the Jewry (this before said I,)
This little child, as he came to and fro,
Full merrily then would he sing and cry,
O *Alma Redemptoris!* high and low:
The sweetness of Christ's mother pierced so
His heart, that her to praise, to her to pray,
He cannot stop his singing by the way.

The Serpent, Satan, our first foe, that hath
His wasp's nest in Jew's heart, upswelled — "O woe,
O Hebrew people!" said he in his wrath,
"Is it an honest thing? Shall this be so?
That such a Boy where'er he list shall go
In your despite, and sing his hymns and saws,
Which is against the reverence of our laws!"

From that day forward have the Jews conspired
Out of the world this Innocent to chace;
And to this end a Homicide they hired,
That in an Alley had a privy place,
And, as the Child 'gan to the School to pace,
This cruel Jew him seized, and held him fast
And cut his throat, and in a pit him cast.

I say that him into a pit they threw,
A loathsome pit whence noisome scents exhale;
O cursed folk! away ye Herods new!
What may your ill intentions you avail?
Murder will out; certes it will not fail;
Know, that the honour of high God may spread,
The blood cries out on your accursed deed.

O Martyr 'stablished in virginity!
Now mayest thou sing for aye before the throne,
Following the Lamb celestial," quoth she,
" Of which the great Evangelist, Saint John,
In Patmos wrote, who saith of them that go
Before the Lamb singing continually,
That never fleshly woman they did know.

Now this poor widow waiteth all that night
After her little Child, and he came not;
For which, by earliest glimpse of morning light,
With face all pale with dread and busy thought
She at the School and elsewhere him hath sought,
Until thus far she learned, that he had been
In the Jews' street, and there he last was seen.

With Mother's pity in her breast enclosed
She goeth, as she were half out of her mind,
To every place wherein she hath supposed
By likelihood her little Son to find;
And ever on Christ's mother meek and kind
She cried, till to the Jewry she was brought,
And him among the accursed Jews she sought.

She asketh, and she piteously doth pray
To every Jew that dwelleth in that place
To tell her if her child had passed that way;
They all said Nay; but Jesu of his grace
Gave to her thought, that in a little space
She for her Son in that same spot did cry
Where he was cast into a pit hard by.

O thou great God that dost perform thy laud
By mouths of Innocents, lo! here thy might;
This gem of chastity, this emerald,
And eke of martyrdom this ruby bright,
There, where with mangled throat he lay upright,
The *Alma Redemptoris* 'gan to sing
So loud that with his voice the place did ring,

The Christian folk that through the Jewry went
Come to the spot in wonder at the thing;
And hastily they for the Provost sent;
Immediately he came not tarrying,
And praiseth Christ that is our heavenly King,
And eke his Mother, honour of Mankind:
Which done, he bade that they the Jews should bind.

This Child with piteous lamentation then
Was taken up, singing his song alway;
And with procession great and pomp of men
To the next Abbey him they bare away;
His Mother swooning by the Bier lay:
And scarcely could the people that were near
Remove this second Rachel from the Bier.

Torment and shameful death to every one
This Provost doth for those bad Jews prepare
That of this murder wist, and that anon:
Such wickedness his judgments cannot spare;
Who will do evil, evil shall he bear;
Them therefore with wild horses did he draw,
And after that he hung them by the law.

Upon his Bier this Innocent doth lie
Before the Altar while the Mass doth last:
The Abbot with his Convent's company
Then sped themselves to bury him full fast;
And, when they holy water on him cast,
Yet spake this Child when sprinkled was the water,
And sang, O *Alma Redemptoris Mater!*

This Abbot for he was a holy man
As all Monks are, or surely ought to be,
In supplication to the Child began
Thus saying, "O dear Child! I summon thee
In virtue of the holy Trinity
Tell me the cause why thou dost sing this hymn,
Since that thy throat is cut, as it doth seem."

"My throat is cut unto the bone, I trow,"
Said this young Child, "and by the law of kind
I should have died, yea many hours ago;
But Jesus Christ, as in the books ye find,
Will that his glory last, and be in mind;
And, for the worship of his Mother dear,
Yet may I sing, O *Alma!* loud and clear.

This well of mercy Jesu's Mother sweet
After my knowledge I have loved alway,
And in the hour when I my death did meet
To me she came, and thus to me did say,
"Thou in thy dying sing this holy lay,"
As ye have heard; and soon as I had sung
Methought she laid a grain upon my tongue.

Wherefore I sing, nor can from song refrain,
In honour of that blissful Maiden free,
'Till from my tongue off-taken is the grain;
And after that thus said she unto me,
"My little Child, then will I come for thee
Soon as the grain from off thy tongue they take,
Be not dismayed, I will not thee forsake!"

This holy Monk, this Abbot — him mean I,
Touched then his tongue, and took away the grain;
And he gave up the ghost full peacefully;
And, when the Abbot had this wonder seen,
His salt tears trickled down like showers of rain,
And on his face he dropped upon the ground,
And still he lay as if he had been bound.

Eke the whole Convent on the pavement lay,
Weeping and praising Jesu's Mother dear;
And after that they rose, and took their way
And lifted up this Martyr from the Bier,
And in a tomb of precious marble clear
Enclosed his uncorrupted body sweet. —
Where'er he be, God grant us him to meet!

Young Hew of Lincoln! in like sort laid low
By cursed Jews — thing well and widely known,
For not long since was dealt the cruel blow,
Pray also thou for us, while here we tarry
Weak sinful folk, that God, with pitying eye,
In mercy would his mercy multiply
On us, for reverence of his Mother Mary!

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

PART FIRST.

I.

PREFATORY SONNET.

NUNS fret not at their Convent's narrow room;
And Hermits are contented with their Cells;
And Students with their pensive Citadels:
Maids at the Wheel, the Weaver at his Loom,
Sit blithe and happy; Bees that soar for bloom,
High as the highest Peak of Furness Fells,
Will murmur by the hour in Foxglove bells:
In truth, the prison, unto which we doom
Ourselves, no prison is: and hence to me,
In sundry moods, 'twas pastime to be bound
Within the Sonnet's scanty plot of ground:
Pleased if some Souls (for such there needs must be)
Who have felt the weight of too much liberty,
Should find short solace there, as I have found.

II.

THERE is a little unpretending Rill
Of limpid water, humbler far than aught
That ever among men or naiads sought
Notice or name! — It quivers down the hill,
Furrowing its shallow way with dubious will;
Yet to my mind this scanty Stream is brought
Oftener than mightiest Floods, whose path is wrought
Through wastes of sand, and forests dark and chill.
Do thou, even thou, O faithful Anna! say
Why this small Streamlet is to me so dear;
Thou know'st, that while enjoyments disappear
And sweet remembrances like flowers decay,
The immortal spirit of one happy day
Lingers upon its marge, in vision clear!

III.

UPON THE SIGHT

OF A

BEAUTIFUL PICTURE,

Painted by Sir GEORGE BEAUMONT, Bart.

PRAISED be the Art whose subtle power could stay
Yon Cloud, and fix it in that glorious shape;
Nor would permit the thin smoke to escape,
Nor those bright sunbeams to forsake the day;
Which stopped that Band of Travellers on their way
Ere they were lost within the shady wood;
And shewed the Bark upon the glassy flood
For ever anchored in her sheltering Bay.
Soul-soothing Art! which Morning, Noon-tide, Even
Do serve with all their changeful pageantry!
Thou, with ambition modest yet sublime,
Here, for the sight of mortal man, hast given
To one brief moment caught from fleeting time
The appropriate calm of blest eternity.

IV.

THE fairest, brightest hues of ether fade;
The sweetest notes must terminate and die;
O Friend! thy flute has breathed a harmony
Softly resounded through this rocky glade;
Such strains of rapture as * the Genius played
In his still haunt on Bagdad's summit high;
He who stood visible to Mirzah's eye,
Never before to human sight betrayed.
Lo, in the vale, the mists of evening spread!
The visionary Arches are not there,
Nor the green Islands, nor the shining Seas;
Yet sacred is to me this Mountain's head,
From which I have been lifted on the breeze
Of harmony, above all earthly care.

* See the vision of Mirzah in the Spectator.

V.

WITH how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the sky,
How silently, and with how wan a face! *
Where art thou? Thou whom I have seen on high
Running among the clouds a wood-nymph's race!
Unhappy Nuns, whose common breath's a sigh
Which they would stifle, move at such a pace!
The Northern wind, to call thee to the chase,
Must blow to-night his bugle horn. Had I
The power of Merlin, Goddess! this should be:
And the keen Stars, fast as the clouds were riven,
Should sally forth, an emulous Company,
Sparkling, and hurrying through the clear blue heaven;
But, Cynthia, should to thee the palm be given,
Queen both for beauty and for majesty.

* From a Sonnet of Sir Philip Sydney.

VI.

AERIAL Rock — whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets my sight;
When I look forth to hail the morning light,
Or quit the stars with lingering farewell — how
Shall I discharge to thee a grateful vow? —
By planting on thy head (in verse, at least,
As I have often done in thought) the crest
Of an imperial Castle, which the plough
Of ruin shall not touch. Innocent scheme!
That doth presume no more than to supply
A grace the sinuous vale and roaring stream
Want, through neglect of hoar Antiquity.
Rise, then, ye votive Towers, and catch a gleam
Of golden sun-set — ere it fade and die!

VII.

WRITTEN UPON A BLANK LEAF IN "THE COMPLETE ANGLER."

WHILE flowing Rivers yield a blameless sport,
Shall live the name of Walton; — Sage benign!
Whose pen, the mysteries of the rod and line
Unfolding, did not fruitlessly exhort
To reverend watching of each still report
That Nature utters from her rural shrine. —
O nobly versed in simple discipline,
Meek, thankful Soul, the vernal day how short
To thy loved pastime given by sedgy Lee,
Or down the tempting maze of Shawford brook!
Fairer than life itself, in thy sweet Book,
The cowslip bank and shady willow-tree,
And the fresh meads; where flow'd, from every nook
Of thy full bosom, gladsome Piety!

VIII.

THE WILD-DUCK'S NEST.

THE Imperial Consort of the Fairy King
Owns not a sylvan bower; or gorgeous cell
With emerald floored, and with purpureal shell
Ceilinged and roofed; that is so fair a thing
As this low structure — for the tasks of Spring
Prepared by one who loves the buoyant swell
Of the brisk waves, yet here consents to dwell;
And spreads in stedfast peace her brooding wing.
Words cannot paint the o'ershadowing yew-tree bough,
And dimly-gleaming Nest, — a hollow crown
Of golden leaves inlaid with silver down,
Fine as the Mother's softest plumes allow:
I gaze — and almost wish to lay aside
Humanity, weak slave of cumbrous pride!

IX.

FALLEN, and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mold,
Is that embattled House, whose massy Keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold. —
There dwelt the gay, the bountiful, the bold,
'Till nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds — when winds were silent, struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient Hold.
Its line of Warriors fled; — they shrunk when tried
By ghostly power: — but Time's unsparing hand
Hath plucked such foes, like weeds, from out the land;
And now, if men with men in peace abide,
All other strength the weakest may withstand,
All worse assaults may safely be defied.

X.

METHOUGHT I saw the footsteps of a throne
Which mists and vapours from mine eyes did shroud —
Nor view of who might sit thereon allowed;
But all the steps and ground about were strown
With sights the ruefullest that flesh and bone
Ever put on; a miserable crowd,
Sick, hale, old, young, who cried before that cloud,
"Thou art our king, O Death! to thee we groan."
I seemed to mount those steps; the vapours gave
Smooth way; and I beheld the face of one
Sleeping alone within a mossy cave,
With her face up to heaven; that seemed to have
Pleasing remembrance of a thought foregone;
A lovely Beauty in a summer grave!

XI.

SURPRIZED by joy — impatient as the Wind
I turned to share the transport — Oh! with whom
But Thee, deep buried in the silent Tomb,
That spot which no vicissitude can find?
Love, faithful love recalled thee to my mind —
But how could I forget thee? — Through what power,
Even for the least division of an hour,
Have I been so beguiled as to be blind
To my most grievous loss? — That thought's return
Was the worst pang that sorrow ever bore,
Save one, one only, when I stood forlorn,
Knowing my heart's best treasure was no more;
That neither present time, nor years unborn
Could to my sight that heavenly face restore.

XII.

November 1, 1815.

How clear, how keen, how marvellously bright
The effluence from yon distant mountain's head,
Which, strewn with snow as smooth as heaven can shed,
Shines like another Sun — on mortal sight
Uprisen, as if to check approaching night,
And all her twinkling stars. Who now would tread,
If so he might, yon mountain's glittering head —
Terrestrial — but a surface, by the flight
Of sad mortality's earth-sullying wing,
Unswept, unstained? Nor shall the aerial Powers
Dissolve that beauty — destined to endure,
White, radiant, spotless, exquisitely pure,
Through all vicissitudes — till genial spring
Have filled the laughing vales with welcome flowers.

XIII.

TO

R. B. HAYDON, ESQ.

HIGH is our calling, Friend! — Creative Art
(Whether the instrument of words she use,
Or pencil pregnant with etherial hues,)
Demands the service of a mind and heart,
Though sensitive, yet, in their weakest part,
Heroically fashioned — to infuse
Faith in the whispers of the lonely Muse,
While the whole world seems adverse to desert:
And, oh! when Nature sinks, as oft she may,
Through long-lived pressure of obscure distress,
Still to be strenuous for the bright reward,
And in the soul admit of no decay, —
Brook no continuance of weak-mindedness:
Great is the glory, for the strife is hard!

XIV.

COMPOSED IN ONE OF THE VALLEYS OF WESTMORELAND, ON EASTER SUNDAY.

With each recurrence of this glorious morn
That saw the Saviour in his human frame
Rise from the dead, erewhile the Cottage-dame
Put on fresh raiment — till that hour unworn:
Domestic hands the home-bred wool had shorn,
And she who span it culled the daintiest fleece,
In thoughtful reverence to the Prince of Peace
Whose temples bled beneath the platted thorn.
A blest estate when piety sublime
These humble props disdained not! O green dales!
Sad may *I* be who heard your sabbath chime
When Art's abused inventions were unknown;
Kind Nature's various wealth was all your own;
And benefits were weighed in Reason's scales!

XV.

GRIEF, thou hast lost an ever ready Friend
Now that the cottage spinning-wheel is mute;
And Care — a Comforter that best could suit
Her froward mood, and softliest reprehend;
And Love — a Charmer's voice, that used to lend,
More efficaciously than aught that flows
From harp or lute, kind influence to compose
The throbbing pulse, — else troubled without end:
Even Joy could tell, Joy craving truce and rest
From her own overflow, what power sedate
On those revolving motions did await
Assiduously, to sooth her aching breast;
And — to a point of just relief — abate
The mantling triumphs of a day too blest.

XVI.

TO THE RIVER DERWENT.

AMONG the mountains where we nursed, loved Stream
Thou, near the eagle's nest — within brief sail,
I, of his bold wing floating on the gale,
Where thy deep voice could lull me! — Faint the beam
Of human life when first allowed to gleam
On mortal notice. — Glory of the Vale,
Such thy meek outset, with a crown though frail
Kept in perpetual verdure by the steam
Of thy soft breath! — Less vivid wreaths entwined
Nemæan Victor's brow; less bright was worn,
Meed of some Roman Chief — in triumph borne
With captives chained; and shedding from his car
The sunset splendors of a finished war
Upon the proud enslavers of mankind!

XVII.

I WATCH, and long have watched, with calm regret
Yon slowly-sinking Star, — immortal Sire
(So might he seem) of all the glittering quire!
Blue ether still surrounds him — yet — and yet;
But now the horizon's rocky parapet
Is reached; where, forfeiting his bright attire,
He burns — transmuted to a sullen fire,
That droops and dwindles; and, the appointed debt
To the flying moments paid, is seen no more.
Angels and Gods! *we* struggle with our fate,
While health, power, glory, pitiably decline,
Depressed and then extinguished: and our state,
In this, how different, lost Star, from thine,
That no to-morrow shall our beams restore!

XVIII.

TO A SNOW-DROP, APPEARING VERY EARLY IN THE SEASON.

LONE Flower, hemmed in with snows and white as
they
But hardier far, though modestly thou bend
Thy front — as if *such* presence could offend!
Who guards thy slender stalk while, day by day,
Storms, sallying from the mountain-tops, way-lay
The rising sun, and on the plains descend?
Accept the greeting that befits a friend
Whose zeal outruns his promise! Blue-eyed May
Shall soon behold this border thickly set
With bright jonquils, their odours lavishing
On the soft west-wind and his frolic peers;
Yet will I not thy gentle grace forget,
Chaste Snow-drop, vent'rous harbinger of Spring,
And pensive monitor of fleeting years!

XIX.

CAPTIVITY.

" As the cold aspect of a sunless way
Strikes through the Traveller's frame with deadlier
chill,
Oft as appears a grove, or obvious hill,
Glistening with unparticipated ray,
Or shining slope where he must never stray;
So joys, remembered without wish or will,
Sharpen the keenest edge of present ill, —
On the crushed heart a heavier burthen lay.
Just Heaven, contract the compass of my mind
To fit proportion with my altered state!
Quench those felicities whose light I find
Burning within my bosom all too late! —
O be my spirit, like my thraldom, strait;
And like mine eyes that stream with sorrow, blind!"

XX.

. . . . . *" gives to airy nothing*
A local habitation and a name."

THOUGH narrow be that Old Man's cares, and near,
The poor Old Man is greater than he seems :
For he hath waking empire, wide as dreams ;
An ample sovereignty of eye and ear.
Rich are his walks with supernatural cheer ;
The region of his inner spirit teems
With vital sounds, and monitory gleams
Of high astonishment and pleasing fear.
He the seven birds hath seen, that never part,
Seen the SEVEN WHISTLERS in their nightly rounds,
And counted them : and oftentimes will start —
For overhead are sweeping GABRIEL'S HOUNDS,
Doomed, with their impious Lord, the flying Hart
To chase for ever, on aërial grounds.

XXI.

PERSONAL TALK.

I AM not One who much or oft delight
To season my fireside with personal talk, —
Of Friends, who live within an easy walk,
Or Neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight:
And, for my chance-acquaintance, Ladies bright,
Sons, Mothers, Maidens withering on the stalk,
These all wear out of me, like Forms, with chalk
Painted on rich men's floors, for one feast-night.
Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage-fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle, whispering its faint undersong.

XXII.

CONTINUED.

"YET life," you say, "is life; we have seen and see,
And with a living pleasure we describe;
And fits of sprightly malice do but bribe
The languid mind into activity.
Sound sense, and love itself, and mirth and glee,
Are fostered by the comment and the gibe."
Even be it so: yet still among your tribe,
Our daily world's true Worldlings, rank not me!
Children are blest, and powerful; their world lies
More justly balanced; partly at their feet,
And part far from them: — sweetest melodies
Are those that are by distance made more sweet;
Whose mind is but the mind of his own eyes
He is a Slave: the meanest we can meet!

XXIII.

CONTINUED.

WINGS have we, — and as far as we can go
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean and mere sky, support that mood
Which with the lofty sanctifies the low:
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good:
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There do I find a never-failing store
Of personal themes, and such as I love best;
Matter wherein right voluble I am:
Two will I mention, dearer than the rest;
The gentle Lady, married to the Moor;
And heavenly Una with her milk-white Lamb.

XXIV.

CONCLUDED.

Nor can I not believe but that hereby
Great gains are mine; for thus I live remote
From evil-speaking; rancour, never sought,
Comes to me not; malignant truth, or lie.
Hence have I genial seasons, hence have I
Smooth passions, smooth discourse and joyous thought:
And thus from day to day my little Boat
Rocks in its harbour, lodging peaceably.
Blessings be with them — and eternal praise,
Who gave us nobler loves, and nobler cares.
The Poets, who on earth have made us Heirs
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays!
Oh! might my name be numbered among theirs,
Then gladly would I end my mortal days.

XXV.

TO SLEEP.

O GENTLE Sleep! do they belong to thee,
These twinklings of oblivion? Thou dost love
To sit in meekness, like the brooding Dove,
A Captive never wishing to be free.
This tiresome night, O Sleep! thou art to me
A Fly, that up and down himself doth shove
Upon a fretful rivulet, now above,
Now on the water vexed with mockery.
I have no pain that calls for patience, no;
Hence I am cross and peevish as a child:
And pleased by fits to have thee for my foe,
Yet ever willing to be reconciled:
O gentle Creature! do not use me so,
But once and deeply let me be beguiled!

XXVI.

TO SLEEP.

A FLOCK of sheep that leisurely pass by,
One after one; the sound of rain, and bees
Murmuring; the fall of rivers, winds and seas,
Smooth fields, white sheets of water, and pure sky;
I've thought of all by turns; and still I lie
Sleepless; and soon the small birds' melodies
Must hear, first uttered from my orchard trees;
And the first Cuckoo's melancholy cry.
Even thus last night, and two nights more, I lay,
And could not win thee, Sleep! by any stealth:
So do not let me wear to-night away:
Without Thee what is all the morning's wealth?
Come, blessed barrier betwixt day and day,
Dear mother of fresh thoughts and joyous health!

XXVII.

TO SLEEP.

FOND words have oft been spoken to thee, Sleep!
And thou hast had thy store of tenderest names;
The very sweetest words that fancy frames
When thankfulness of heart is strong and deep!
Dear bosom Child we call thee, that dost steep
In rich reward all suffering; Balm that tames
All anguish; Saint that evil thoughts and aims
Takest away, and into souls dost creep,
Like to a breeze from heaven. Shall I alone,
I surely not a man ungently made,
Call thee worst Tyrant by which Flesh is crost?
Perverse, self-willed to own and to disown,
Mere Slave of them who never for thee prayed,
Still last to come where thou art wanted most!

XXVIII.

With Ships the sea was sprinkled far and nigh,
Like stars in heaven, and joyously it showed;
Some lying fast at anchor in the road,
Some veering up and down, one knew not why.
A goodly Vessel did I then espy
Come like a Giant from a haven broad;
And lustily along the Bay she strode,
" Her tackling rich, and of apparel high."
This Ship was nought to me, nor I to her,
Yet I pursued her with a Lover's look;
This Ship to all the rest did I prefer:
When will she turn, and whither? She will brook
No tarrying; where she comes the winds must stir:
On went She, — and due north her journey took

XXIX.

It is a beauteous Evening, calm and free;
The holy time is quiet as a Nun
Breathless with adoration; the broad sun
Is sinking down in its tranquillity;
The gentleness of heaven is on the Sea:
Listen! the mighty Being is awake,
And doth with his eternal motion make
A sound like thunder — everlastingly.
Dear Child! dear Girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest "in Abraham's bosom" all the year;
And worshipp'st at the Temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not.

XXX.

COMPOSED ON THE EVE OF THE MARRIAGE OF A FRIEND, IN THE VALE OF GRASMERE.

WHAT need of clamorous bells, or ribbands gay,
These humble Nuptials to proclaim or grace?
Angels of Love, look down upon the place,
Shed on the chosen Vale a sun-bright day!
Even for such omen would the Bride display
No mirthful gladness: — serious is her face,
Modest her mien; and she, whose thoughts keep pace
With gentleness, in that becoming way
Will thank you. Faultless does the Maid appear,
No disproportion in her soul, no strife:
But, when the closer view of wedded life
Hath shewn that nothing human can be clear
From frailty, for that insight may the Wife
To her indulgent Lord become more dear.

XXXI.

ON APPROACHING HOME AFTER A TOUR IN SCOTLAND, 1803.

FLY, some kind Spirit, fly to Grasmere Vale!
Say that we come, and come by this day's light;
Glad tidings! — spread them over field and height;
But chiefly let one Cottage hear the tale;
There let a mystery of joy prevail,
The Kitten frolic with unruly might,
And Rover whine, as at a second sight
Of near-approaching good that shall not fail; —
And from that Infant's face let joy appear;
Yea, let our Mary's one Companion Child,
That hath her six weeks' solitude beguiled
With intimations manifold and dear,
While we have wandered over wood and wild,
Smile on his Mother now with bolder cheer.

XXXII.

From the dark chambers of dejection freed,
Spurning the unprofitable yoke of care
Rise, Gillies, rise: the gales of youth shall bear
Thy genius forward like a winged steed.
Though bold Bellerophon (so Jove decreed
In wrath) fell headlong from the fields of air,
Yet a high guerdon waits on minds that dare,
If aught be in them of immortal seed,
And reason govern that audacious flight
Which heav'n-ward they direct. — Then droop not thou,
Erroneously renewing a sad vow
In the low dell mid Roslin's fading grove:
A cheerful life is what the Muses love,
A soaring spirit is their prime delight.

XXXIII.

TO THE MEMORY OF RAISLEY CALVERT.

CALVERT! it must not be unheard by them
Who may respect my name, that I to thee
Owed many years of early liberty.
This care was thine when sickness did condemn
Thy youth to hopeless wasting, root and stem:
That I, if frugal and severe, might stray
Where'er I liked; and finally array
My temples with the Muse's diadem.
Hence, if in freedom I have loved the truth,
If there be aught of pure, or good, or great,
In my past verse, — or shall be, in the lays
Of higher mood, which now I meditate, —
It gladdens me, O worthy, short-lived Youth!
To think how much of this will be thy praise.

MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.

PART SECOND.

I.

WHILE not a leaf seems faded, — while the fields,
With ripening harvest prodigally fair,
In brightest sunshine bask, — this nipping air,
Sent from some distant clime where Winter wields
His icy scymetar, a foretaste yields
Of bitter change — and bids the Flowers beware;
And whispers to the silent Birds, "Prepare
Against the threatening Foe your trustiest shields."
For me, who under kindlier laws belong
To Nature's tuneful quire, this rustling dry
Through the green leaves, and yon crystalline sky,
Announce a season potent to renew,
Mid frost and snow, the instinctive joys of song, —
And nobler cares than listless summer knew.

II.

THIS, AND THE TWO FOLLOWING, WERE SUGGESTED BY MR. W. WESTALL'S VIEWS OF THE CAVES, &C. IN YORKSHIRE.

PURE element of waters! wheresoe'er
Thou dost forsake thy subterranean haunts,
Green herbs, bright flowers, and berry-bearing plants,
— Rise into life and in thy train appear:
And, through the sunny portion of the year,
Swift insects shine, thy hovering pursuivants:
And, if thy bounty fail, the forest pants;
And hart and hind and hunter with his spear,
Languish and droop together. Nor unfelt
In man's perturbed soul thy sway benign;
And, haply, far within the marble belt
Of central earth, where tortured Spirits pine
For grace and goodness lost, thy murmurs melt
Their anguish, — and they blend sweet songs with thine! *

* Waters (as Mr. Westall informs us in the letter-press prefixed to his admirable views) are invariably found to flow through these caverns.

III.

GORDALE.

At early dawn, — or rather when the air
Glimmers with fading light, and shadowy eve
Is busiest to confer and to bereave, —
Then, pensive Votary, let thy feet repair
To Gordale-chasm, terrific as the lair
Where the young lions couch; — for so, by leave
Of the propitious hour, thou may'st perceive
The local Deity, with oozy hair
And mineral crown, beside his jagged urn
Recumbent: — Him thou may'st behold, who hides
His lineaments by day, and there presides,
Teaching the docile waters how to turn;
Or, if need be, impediment to spurn,
And force their passage to the salt-sea tides!

IV.

MALHAM COVE.

WAS the aim frustrated by force or guile,
When giants scooped from out the rocky ground
— Tier under tier — this semicirque profound?
(Giants — the same who built in Erin's isle
That Causeway with incomparable toil!)
O, had this vast theatric structure wound
With finished sweep into a perfect round,
No mightier work had gained the plausive smile
Of all-beholding Phœbus! But, alas,
Vain earth! — false world! — Foundations must be
laid
In Heav'n; for, mid the wreck of IS and WAS,
Things incomplete and purposes betrayed
Make sadder transits o'er truth's mystic glass
Than noblest objects utterly decayed.

V.

COMPOSED DURING A SEVERE STORM.

ONE who was suffering tumult in his soul —
Yet failed to seek the sure relief of prayer —
Went forth — his course surrendering to the care
Of the fierce wind, while mid-day lightnings prowl
Insidiously, — untimely thunders growl, —
While trees, dim-seen, in frenzied numbers tear
The lingering remnant of their yellow hair, —
And shivering wolves, surprised with darkness howl
As if the sun were not: — he lifted high
His head — and in a moment did appear
Large space, mid dreadful clouds, of purest sky,
An azure orb — shield of Tranquillity,
Invisible unlooked-for minister
Of providential goodness ever nigh!

VI.

COMPOSED ON THE BANKS OF A ROCKY STREAM.

DOGMATIC Teachers, of the snow-white fur!
Ye wrangling Schoolmen, of the scarlet hood!
Who, with a keenness not to be withstood,
Press the point home, — or falter and demur,
Checked in your course by many a teazing burr;
These natural council-seats your acrid blood
Might cool; — and, as the Genius of the flood
Stoops willingly to animate and spur
Each lighter function slumbering in the brain,
Yon eddying balls of foam — these arrowy gleams,
That o'er the pavement of the surging streams
Welter and flash — a synod might detain
With subtile speculations, haply vain,
But surely less so than your far-fetched themes!

VII.

WRITTEN IN VERY EARLY YOUTH.

CALM is all nature as a resting wheel.
The Kine are couched upon the dewy grass;
The Horse alone, seen dimly as I pass,
Is up, and cropping yet his later meal:
Dark is the ground; a slumber seems to steal
O'er vale, and mountain, and the starless sky.
Now, in this blank of things, a harmony,
Home-felt, and home-created, seems to heal
That grief for which the senses still supply
Fresh food; for only then, when memory
Is hushed, am I at rest. My Friends! restrain
Those busy cares that would allay my pain:
Oh! leave me to myself; nor let me feel
The officious touch that makes me droop again.

VIII.

COMPOSED UPON WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, SEPT. 3. 1803.

EARTH has not any thing to shew more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

IX.

PELION and Ossa flourished side by side,
Together in immortal books enrolled:
His ancient dower Olympus hath not sold;
And that inspiring Hill, which "did divide
Into two ample horns his forehead wide,"
Shines with poetic radiance as of old;
While not an English Mountain we behold
By the celestial Muses glorified.
Yet round our sea-girt shore they rise in crowds:
What was the great Parnassus' self to Thee,
Mount Skiddaw? In his natural sovereignty
Our British Hill is fairer far: He shrouds
His double-fronted head in higher clouds,
And pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly.

X.

BROOK! whose society the Poet seeks
Intent his wasted spirits to renew;
And whom the curious Painter doth pursue
Through rocky passes, among flowery creeks,
And tracks thee dancing down thy water-breaks;
If I some type of thee did wish to view,
Thee, — and not thee thyself, I would not do
Like Grecian Artists, give thee human cheeks,
Channels for tears; no Naiad should'st thou be,
Have neither limbs, feet, feathers, joints, nor hairs;
It seems the Eternal Soul is clothed in thee
With purer robes than those of flesh and blood,
And hath bestowed on thee a better good;
Unwearied joy, and life without its cares.

XI.

HAIL Twilight, — sovereign of one peaceful hour!
Not dull art Thou as undiscerning Night;
But studious only to remove from sight
Day's mutable distinctions. — Ancient Power!
Thus did the waters gleam, the mountains lower
To the rude Briton, when, in wolf-skin vest
Here roving wild, he laid him down to rest
On the bare rock, or through a leafy bower
Looked ere his eyes were closed. By him was seen
The self-same Vision which we now behold,
At thy meek bidding, shadowy Power, brought forth; —
These mighty barriers, and the gulph between;
The floods, — the stars; — a spectacle as old
As the beginning of the heavens and earth!

XII.

THE Shepherd, looking eastward, softly said,
"Bright is thy veil, O Moon, as thou art bright!"
Forthwith, that little Cloud, in ether spread,
And penetrated all with tender light,
She cast away, and shewed her fulgent head
Uncovered;—dazzling the Beholder's sight
As if to vindicate her beauty's right,
Her beauty thoughtlessly disparaged.
Meanwhile that Veil, removed or thrown aside,
Went, floating from her, darkening as it went;
And a huge Mass, to bury or to hide,
Approached this glory of the firmament;
Who meekly yields, and is obscured;—content
With one calm triumph of a modest pride.

XIII.

ADMONITION,

Intended more particularly for the Perusal of those who may have happened to be enamoured of some beautiful Place of Retreat, in the Country of the Lakes.

YES, there is holy pleasure in thine eye!
— The lovely Cottage in the guardian nook
Hath stirred thee deeply; with its own dear brook,
Its own small pasture, almost its own sky!
But covet not the Abode — Oh! do not sigh,
As many do, repining while they look;
Sighing a wish to tear from Nature's Book
This blissful leaf with harsh impiety.
Think what the home would be if it were thine,
Even thine, though few thy wants! — Roof, window, door,
The very flowers are sacred to the Poor,
The roses to the Porch which they entwine:
Yea, all, that now enchants thee, from the day
On which it should be touched would melt, and melt away!

XIV.

" Beloved Vale!" I said, " when I shall con
Those many records of my childish years,
Remembrance of myself and of my peers
Will press me down: to think of what is gone
Will be an awful thought, if life have one."
But, when into the Vale I came, no fears
Distressed me; I looked round, I shed no tears;
Deep thought, or awful vision, I had none.
By thousand petty fancies I was crost,
To see the Trees, which I had thought so tall,
Mere dwarfs; the Brooks so narrow, Fields so small.
A Juggler's Balls old Time about him tossed;
I looked, I stared, I smiled, I laughed; and all
The weight of sadness was in wonder lost.

XV.

TO THE LADY BEAUMONT.

LADY! the songs of Spring were in the grove
While I was framing beds for winter flowers;
While I was planting green unfading bowers,
And shrubs to hang upon the warm alcove,
And sheltering wall; and still, as fancy wove
The dream, to time and nature's blended powers
I gave this paradise for winter hours,
A labyrinth, Lady! which your feet shall rove.
Yes! when the sun of life more feebly shines,
Becoming thoughts, I trust, of solemn gloom
Or of high gladness you shall hither bring;
And these perennial bowers and murmuring pines
Be gracious as the music and the bloom
And all the mighty ravishment of spring.

XVI.

THE world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

XVII.

How sweet it is, when mother Fancy rocks
The wayward brain, to saunter through a wood!
An old place, full of many a lovely brood, [flocks;
Tall trees, green arbours, and ground-flowers in
And wild rose tip-toe upon hawthorn stocks,
Like to a bonny Lass, who plays her pranks
At Wakes and Fairs with wandering Mountebanks,—
When she stands cresting the Clown's head, and
The crowd beneath her. Verily I think, [mocks
Such place to me is sometimes like a dream
Or map of the whole world: thoughts, link by link,
Enter through ears and eyesight, with such gleam
Of all things, that at last in fear I shrink,
And leap at once from the delicious stream.

XVIII.

WHERE lies the Land to which yon Ship must go?
Festively she puts forth in trim array;
As vigorous as a Lark at break of day:
Is she for tropic suns, or polar snow?
What boots the enquiry? — Neither friend nor foe
She cares for; let her travel where she may,
She finds familiar names, a beaten way
Ever before her, and a wind to blow.
Yet still I ask, what Haven is her mark?
And, almost as it was when ships were rare,
(From time to time, like Pilgrims, here and there
Crossing the waters) doubt, and something dark,
Of the old Sea some reverential fear,
Is with me at thy farewell, joyous Bark!

XIX.

EVEN as a dragon's eye that feels the stress
Of a bedimming sleep, or as a lamp
Sullenly glaring through sepulchral damp,
So burns yon Taper mid its black recess
Of mountains, silent, dreary, motionless:
The Lake below reflects it not; the sky
Muffled in clouds affords no company
To mitigate and cheer its loneliness.
Yet round the body of that joyless Thing,
Which sends so far its melancholy light,
Perhaps are seated in domestic ring
A gay society with faces bright,
Conversing, reading, laughing; — or they sing,
While hearts and voices in the song unite.

XX.

MARK the concentred Hazels that enclose
Yon old grey Stone, protected from the ray
Of noontide suns: — and even the beams that play
And glance, while wantonly the rough wind blows,
Are seldom free to touch the moss that grows
Upon that roof — amid embowering gloom
The very image framing of a Tomb,
In which some ancient Chieftain finds repose
Among the lonely mountains. — Live, ye Trees!
And Thou, grey Stone, the pensive likeness keep
Of a dark chamber where the Mighty sleep:
For more than Fancy to the influence bends
When solitary Nature condescends
To mimic Time's forlorn humanities.

XXI.

TO THE POET, JOHN DYER.

BARD of the Fleece, whose skilful Genius made
That Work a living landscape fair and bright;
Nor hallowed less with musical delight
Than those soft scenes through which thy Childhood strayed,
Those southern Tracts of Cambria, "deep embayed,
By green hills fenced, by Ocean's murmur lulled;"
Though hasty Fame hath many a chaplet culled
For worthless brows, while in the pensive shade
Of cold neglect she leaves thy head ungraced,
Yet pure and powerful minds, hearts meek and still,
A grateful few, shall love thy modest Lay
Long as the Shepherd's bleating flock shall stray
O'er naked Snowdon's wide aërial waste;
Long as the thrush shall pipe on Grongar Hill.

XXII.

COMPOSED AFTER A JOURNEY ACROSS THE HAMILTON HILLS, YORKSHIRE.

DARK, and more dark, the shades of Evening fell;
The wished-for point was reached — but late the hour;
And little could we see of all that power
Of prospect, whereof many thousands tell.
The western sky did recompence us well
With Grecian Temple, Minaret, and Bower;
And, in one part, a Minster with its Tower
Substantially expressed — a place for Bell
Or Clock to toll from! Many a glorious pile
Did we behold, fair sights that might repay
All disappointment! and, as such, the eye
Delighted in them; but we felt, the while,
We should forget them: — they are of the sky,
And from our earthly memory fade away.

XXIII.

. . . . . *" they are of the sky,*
And from our earthly memory fade away."

THESE words were uttered in a pensive mood,
Mine eyes yet lingering on that solemn sight:
A contrast and reproach to gross delight,
And life's unspiritual pleasures daily wooed!
But now upon this thought I cannot brood;
It is unstable, and deserts me quite:
Nor will I praise a Cloud, however bright,
Disparaging Man's gifts, and proper food.
The Grove, the sky-built Temple, and the Dome,
Though clad in colours beautiful and pure,
Find in the heart of man no natural home:
The immortal Mind craves objects that enduro:
These cleave to it; from these it cannot roam,
Nor they from it: their fellowship is secure.

XXIV.

COMPOSED AT ——— CASTLE.

DEGENERATE Douglas! oh, the unworthy Lord!
Whom mere despite of heart could so far please,
And love of havoc (for with such disease
Fame taxes him) that he could send forth word
To level with the dust a noble horde,
A brotherhood of venerable Trees,
Leaving an ancient Dome, and Towers like these,
Beggared and outraged! — Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old Trees; and oft with pain
The Traveller, at this day, will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed:
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.

XXV.

TO THE LADY MARY LOWTHER.

With a selection from the Poems of Anne, Countess of Winchelsea; and extracts of similar character from other writers; the whole transcribed by a female friend.

LADY! I rifled a Parnassian Cave
(But seldom trod) of mildly-gleaming ore;
And culled, from sundry beds, a lucid store
Of genuine crystals, pure as those that pave
The azure brooks where Dian joys to lave
Her spotless limbs; and ventured to explore
Dim shades — for reliques, upon Lethe's shore,
Cast up at random by the sullen wave.
To female hands the treasures were resigned;
And lo this work! — a grotto bright and clear
From stain or taint; in which thy blameless mind
May feed on thoughts though pensive not austere;
Or, if thy deeper spirit be inclined
To holy musing, it may enter here.

XXVI.

ON SEEING A TUFT OF SNOWDROPS IN A STORM.

WHEN haughty expectations prostrate lie,
And grandeur crouches like a guilty thing,
Oft shall the lowly weak, till nature bring
Mature release, in fair society
Survive, and Fortune's utmost anger try;
Like these frail snow-drops that together cling,
And nod their helmets smitten by the wing
Of many a furious whirlblast sweeping by.
Observe the faithful flowers! if small to great
May lead the thoughts, thus struggling used to stand
The Emathian phalanx, nobly obstinate;
And so the bright immortal Theban band,
Whom onset, fiercely urged at Jove's command,
Might overwhelm, but could not separate!

XXVII.

FROM THE ITALIAN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.

YES! hope may with my strong desire keep pace,
And I be undeluded, unbetrayed;
For if of our affections none find grace
In sight of Heaven, then, wherefore hath God made
The world which we inhabit? Better plea
Love cannot have, than that in loving thee
Glory to that eternal Peace is paid,
Who such Divinity to thee imparts
As hallows and makes pure all gentle hearts.
His hope is treacherous only whose loves dies
With beauty, which is varying every hour:
But, in chaste hearts uninfluenced by the power
Of outward change, there blooms a deathless flower,
That breathes on earth the air of paradise.

XXVIII.

FROM THE SAME.

TO THE SUPREME BEING.

THE prayers I make will then be sweet indeed
If Thou the spirit give by which I pray:
My unassisted heart is barren clay,
Which of its native self can nothing feed:
Of good and pious works thou art the seed,
Which quickens only where thou say'st it may:
Unless thou shew to us thine own true way
No man can find it: Father! thou must lead.
Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind
By which such virtue may in me be bred
That in thy holy footsteps I may tread;
The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,
That I may have the power to sing of thee,
And sound thy praises everlastingly.

XXIX.

FROM THE SAME.

No mortal object did these eyes behold
When first they met the placid light of thine,
And my Soul felt her destiny divine,
And hope of endless peace in me grew bold:
Heaven-born, the Soul a heaven-ward course must hold;
Beyond the visible world She soars to seek,
(For what delights the sense is false and weak)
Ideal Form, the universal mould.
The wise man, I affirm, can find no rest
In that which perishes: nor will he lend
His heart to aught which doth on time depend.
'Tis sense, unbridled will, and not true love,
Which kills the soul: Love betters what is best,
Even here below, but more in heaven above.

XXX.

I HEARD (alas! 'twas only in a dream)
Strains — which, as sage Antiquity believed,
By waking ears have sometimes been received,
Wafted adown the wind from lake or stream;
A most melodious requiem, — a supreme
And perfect harmony of notes, achieved
By a fair Swan, on drowsy billows heaved,
O'er which her pinions shed a silver gleam: —
For is she not the votary of Apollo?
And knows she not, singing as he inspires,
That bliss awaits her which the ungenial hollow *
Of the dull earth partakes not, nor desires?
Mount, tuneful Bird, and join the immortal quires
She soared — and I awoke, — struggling in vain to follow.

* See the Phedo of Plato, by which this Sonnet was suggested.

XXXI.

THE Stars are mansions built by Nature's hand;
And, haply, there the spirits of the blest
Live, clothed in radiance, their immortal vest;
Huge Ocean frames, within his yellow strand,
A Habitation marvellously planned,
For life to occupy in love and rest;
All that we see — is dome, or vault, or nest,
Or fort, erected at her sage command.
Is this a vernal thought? Even so, the Spring
Gave it while cares were weighing on my heart,
Mid song of birds, and insects murmuring;
And while the youthful year's prolific art —
Of bud, leaf, blade, and flower — was fashioning
Abodes, where self-disturbance hath no part.

XXXII.

ON THE DETRACTION WHICH FOLLOWED THE PUBLICATION OF A CERTAIN POEM.

See Milton's Sonnet, beginning
"A Book was writ of late called 'Tetrachordon.'"

A Book came forth of late, called "Peter Bell;"
Not negligent the style; — the matter? — good
As aught that song records of Robin Hood;
Or Roy, renowned through many a Scottish dell;
But some (who brook these hacknied themes full well,
Nor chafe, at Tam o' Shanter's name, their blood)
Waxed wroth, and with foul claws, a harpy brood,
On Bard and Hero clamorously fell.
Heed not, wild Rover once through heath and glen,
Who mad'st at length the better life thy choice,
Heed not such onset! nay, if praise of men
To thee appear not an unmeaning voice,
Lift up that grey-haired forehead, and rejoice
In the just tribute of thy Poet's pen!

XXXIII.

Eve's lingering clouds extend in solid bars
Through the grey west; and lo! these waters, steeled
By breezeless air to smoothest polish, yield
A vivid repetition of the stars;
Jove — Venus — and the ruddy crest of Mars,
Amid his fellows, beauteously revealed
At happy distance from earth's groaning field,
Where ruthless mortals wage incessant wars.
Is it a mirror? — or the nether sphere
Opening its vast abyss, while fancy feeds
On the rich show! — But list! a voice is near;
Great Pan himself low-whispering through the reeds,
"Be thankful thou; for, if unholy deeds
Ravage the world, tranquillity is here!"

XXXIV.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

Ye sacred Nurseries of blooming Youth!
In whose collegiate shelter England's Flowers
Expand — enjoying through their vernal hours
The air of liberty, the light of truth;
Much have ye suffered from Time's gnawing tooth,
Yet, O ye Spires of Oxford! Domes and Towers!
Gardens and Groves! your presence overpowers
The soberness of Reason; 'till, in sooth,
Transformed, and rushing on a bold exchange,
I slight my own beloved Cam, to range
Where silver Isis leads my stripling feet;
Pace the long avenue, or glide adown
The stream-like windings of that glorious street,
— An eager Novice robed in fluttering gown!

XXXV.

OXFORD, MAY 30, 1820.

SHAME on this faithless heart! that could allow
Such transport — though but for a moment's space;
Not while — to aid the spirit of the place —
The crescent moon cleaves with its glittering prow
The clouds, or night-bird sings from shady bough;
But in plain day-light: — She, too, at my side,
Who, with her heart's experience satisfied,
Maintains inviolate its slightest vow.
Sweet Fancy! other gifts must I receive;
Proofs of a higher sovereignty I claim;
Take from *her* brow the withering flowers of Eve,
And to that brow Life's morning wreath restore;
Let *her* be comprehended in the frame
Of these illusions, or they please no more.

XXXVI.

ON THE DEATH OF HIS LATE MAJESTY

WARD of the LAW! — dread Shadow of a King!
Whose Realm had dwindled to one stately room;
Whose universe was gloom immersed in gloom,
Darkness as thick as Life o'er Life could fling,
Yet haply cheered with some faint glimmering
Of Faith and Hope; if thou, by nature's doom,
Gently hast sunk into the quiet tomb,
Why should we bend in grief, to sorrow cling,
When thankfulness were best? — Fresh-flowing tears,
Or, where tears flow not, sigh succeeding sigh,
Yield to such after-thought the sole reply
Which justly it can claim. The Nation hears
In this deep knell — silent for threescore years,
An unexampled voice of awful memory!

XXXVII.

June, 1820.

FAME tells of Groves — from England far away —
* Groves that inspire the Nightingale to trill
And modulate, with subtle reach of skill
Elsewhere unmatched, her ever-varying lay;
Such bold report I venture to gainsay:
For I have heard the choir of Richmond hill
Chaunting with indefatigable bill;
While I bethought me of a distant day;
When, haply under shade of that same wood,
And scarcely conscious of the dashing oars
Plied steadily between those willowy shores,
The sweet-souled Poet of the Seasons stood —
Listening, and listening long, in rapturous mood,
Ye heavenly Birds! to your Progenitors.

* Wallachia is the country alluded to.

SONNETS

DEDICATED

TO LIBERTY.

PART FIRST.

I.

COMPOSED BY THE SEA-SIDE, NEAR CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

FAIR Star of Evening, Splendor of the West,
Star of my country! — on the horizon's brink
Thou hangest, stooping, as might seem, to sink
On England's bosom; yet well pleased to rest,
Meanwhile, and be to her a glorious crest
Conspicuous to the Nations. Thou, I think,
Shouldest be my Country's emblem; and shouldest wink,
Bright Star! with laughter on her banners, drest
In thy fresh beauty. There! that dusky spot
Beneath thee, it is England; there it lies.
Blessings be on you both! one hope, one lot,
One life, one glory! I with many a fear
For my dear Country, many heartfelt sighs,
Among Men who do not love her, linger here.

II.

CALAIS, AUGUST, 1802.

Is it a Reed that's shaken by the wind,
Or what is it that ye go forth to see?
Lords, Lawyers, Statesmen, Squires of low degree,
Men known, and men unknown, Sick, Lame, and Blind,
Post forward all, like Creatures of one kind,
With first-fruit offerings crowd to bend the knee
In France, before the new-born Majesty.
'Tis ever thus. Ye Men of prostrate mind!
A seemly reverence may be paid to power;
But that's a loyal virtue, never sown
In haste, nor springing with a transient shower:
When truth, when sense, when liberty were flown
What hardship had it been to wait an hour?
Shame on you, feeble Heads to slavery prone!

III.

TO A FRIEND.

COMPOSED NEAR CALAIS, ON THE ROAD LEADING TO ARDRES, AUGUST 7TH, 1807.

JONES! while from Calais southward you and I
Urged our accordant steps, this public Way
Streamed with the pomp of a too-credulous day, *
When faith was pledged to new-born Liberty:
A homeless sound of joy was in the Sky;
The antiquated Earth, as one might say,
Beat like the heart of Man: songs, garlands, play,
Banners, and happy faces, far and nigh!
And now, sole register that these things were,
Two solitary greetings have I heard,
"*Good morrow, Citizen!*" a hollow word,
As if a dead Man spake it! Yet despair
I feel not: jocund as a warbling Bird;
Fair seasons yet will come, and hopes as fair.

* 14th July, 1790.

IV.

1801.

I GRIEVED for Buonaparte, with a vain
And an unthinking grief! for, who aspires
To genuine greatness but from just desires,
And knowledge such as *he* could never gain?
'Tis not in battles that from youth we train
The Governor who must be wise and good,
And temper with the sternness of the brain
Thoughts motherly, and meek as womanhood.
Wisdom doth live with children round her knees:
Books, leisure, perfect freedom, and the talk
Man holds with week-day man in the hourly walk
Of the mind's business: these are the degrees
By which true Sway doth mount; this is the stalk
True power doth grow on; and her rights are these.

V.

CALAIS, AUGUST 15TH, 1802.

FESTIVALS have I seen that were not names:
This is young Buonaparte's natal day,
And his is henceforth an established sway,
Consul for life. With worship France proclaims
Her approbation, and with pomps and games.
Heaven grant that other Cities may be gay!
Calais is not: and I have bent my way
To the sea-coast, noting that each man frames
His business as he likes. Far different time
That was, which here I witnessed, long ago;
The senselessness of joy was then sublime!
Happy is he, who, caring not for Pope,
Consul, or King, can sound himself to know
The destiny of Man, and live in hope.

VI.

ON THE EXTINCTION OF THE VENETIAN REPUBLIC.

Once did She hold the gorgeous East in fee;
And was the safeguard of the West: the worth
Of Venice did not fall below her birth,
Venice, the eldest Child of Liberty.
She was a Maiden City, bright and free;
No guile seduced, no force could violate;
And, when She took unto herself a Mate,
She must espouse the everlasting Sea.
And what if she had seen those glories fade,
Those titles vanish, and that strength decay;
Yet shall some tribute of regret be paid
When her long life hath reached its final day:
Men are we, and must grieve when even the Shad
Of that which once was great, is passed away.

VII.

THE KING OF SWEDEN.

THE Voice of Song from distant lands shall call
To that great King; shall hail the crowned Youth
Who, taking counsel of unbending Truth,
By one example hath set forth to all
How they with dignity may stand; or fall,
If fall they must. Now, whither doth it tend?
And what to him and his shall be the end?
That thought is one which neither can appal
Nor cheer him; for the illustrious Swede hath done
The thing which ought to be: He stands *above*
All consequences: work he hath begun
Of fortitude, and piety, and love,
Which all his glorious Ancestors approve:
The Heroes bless him, him their rightful Son.

VIII.

TO TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE.

TOUISSAINT, the most unhappy Man of Men!
Whether the whistling Rustic tend his plough
Within thy hearing, or Thou liest now
Buried in some deep dungeon's earless den;—
O miserable Chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen Thyself, never to rise again,
Live, and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth and skies;
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and Man's unconquerable mind.

IX.

September 1st, 1802.

We had a fellow-Passenger who came
From Calais with us, gaudy in array, —
A Negro Woman like a Lady gay,
Yet silent as a Woman fearing blame;
Dejected, meek, yea pitiably tame,
She sate, from notice turning not away,
But on our proffered kindness still did lay
A weight of languid speech, — or at the same
Was silent, motionless in eyes and face.
She was a Negro Woman driven from France,
Rejected like all others of that race,
Not one of whom may now find footing there;
This the poor Out-cast did to us declare,
Nor murmured at the unfeeling Ordinance.

X.

COMPOSED IN THE VALLEY, NEAR DOVER, ON THE DAY OF LANDING.

DEAR Fellow-traveller! here we are once more.
The Cock that crows, the Smoke that curls, that sound
Of Bells, — those Boys who in yon meadow-ground
In white sleeved shirts are playing, — and the roar
Of the waves breaking on the chalky shore, —
All, all are English. Oft have I looked round
With joy in Kent's green vales; but never found
Myself so satisfied in heart before.
Europe is yet in Bonds; but let that pass,
Thought for another moment. Thou art free,
My Country! and 'tis joy enough and pride
For one hour's perfect bliss, to tread the grass
Of England once again, and hear and see,
With such a dear Companion at my side.

XI.

September, 1802.

INLAND, within a hollow Vale, I stood;
And saw, while sea was calm and air was clear,
The Coast of France, the Coast of France how near!
Drawn almost into frightful neighbourhood.
I shrunk, for verily the barrier flood
Was like a Lake, or River bright and fair,
A span of waters; yet what power is there!
What mightiness for evil and for good!
Even so doth God protect us if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow, and Waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and Power, and Deity,
Yet in themselves are nothing! One decree
Spake laws to *them*, and said that by the Soul
Only the Nations shall be great and free.

XII.

THOUGHT OF A BRITON ON THE SUBJUGATION OF SWITZERLAND.

Two Voices are there; one is of the Sea,
One of the Mountains; each a mighty Voice:
In both from age to age Thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen Music, Liberty!
There came a Tyrant, and with holy glee
Thou fough'tst against Him; but hast vainly striven,
Thou from thy Alpine Holds at length art driven,
Where not a torrent murmurs heard by thee.
Of one deep bliss thine ear hath been bereft:
Then cleave, O cleave to that which still is left;
For, high-souled Maid, what sorrow would it be
That mountain Floods should thunder as before,
And Ocean bellow from his rocky shore,
And neither awful Voice be heard by thee!

XIII.

WRITTEN IN LONDON, SEPTEMBER, 1802.

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our Life is only drest
For shew; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a Brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest:
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

XIV.

LONDON, 1802.

MILTON! thou should'st be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a Star and dwelt apart:
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

XV.

GREAT Men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom, better none:
The later Sydney, Marvel, Harington,
Young Vane and others who called Milton Friend.
These Moralists could act and comprehend:
They knew how genuine glory was put on;
Taught us how rightfully a nation shone
In splendor: what strength was, that would not bend
But in magnanimous meekness. France, 'tis strange
Hath brought forth no such souls as we had then.
Perpetual emptiness! unceasing change!
No single Volume paramount, no code,
No master spirit, no determined road;
But equally a want of Books and Men!

XVI.

It is not to be thought of that the Flood
Of British freedom, which to the open Sea
Of the world's praise from dark antiquity
Hath flowed, "with pomp of waters, unwithstood;"
Road by which all might come and go that would,
And bear out freights of worth to foreign lands;
That this most famous Stream in Bogs and Sands
Should perish; and to evil and to good
Be lost for ever. In our Halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible Knights of old:
We must be free or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakespeare spake; the faith and morals hold
Which Milton held. — In every thing we are sprung
Of Earth's first blood, have titles manifold.

XVII.

When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great Nations, how ennobling thoughts depart
When men change Swords for Ledgers, and desert
The Student's bower for gold, some fears unnamed
I had my Country! — am I to be blamed?
But when I think of Thee, and what Thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart,
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.
But dearly must we prize thee; we who find
In thee a bulwark of the cause of men;
And I by my affection was beguiled.
What wonder if a Poet now and then,
Among the many movements of his mind,
Felt for thee as a Lover or a Child.

XVIII.

October, 1803.

One might believe that natural miseries
Had blasted France, and made of it a land
Unfit for Men; and that in one great Band
Her Sons were bursting forth, to dwell at ease.
But 'tis a chosen soil, where sun and breeze
Shed gentle favours; rural works are there;
And ordinary business without care;
Spot rich in all things that can soothe and please!
How piteous then that there should be such dearth
Of knowledge; that whole myriads should unite
To work against themselves such fell despite:
Should come in phrenzy and in drunken mirth,
Impatient to put out the only light
Of Liberty that yet remains on Earth!

XIX.

THERE is a bondage which is worse to bear
Then his who breathes, by roof, and floor, and wall,
Pent in, a Tyrant's solitary Thrall:
'Tis his who walks about in the open air,
One of a Nation who, henceforth, must wear
Their fetters in their Souls. For who could be,
Who, even the best, in such condition, free
From self-reproach, reproach which he must share
With Human Nature? Never be it ours
To see the Sun how brightly it will shine,
And know that noble Feelings, manly Powers,
Instead of gathering strength must droop and pine,
And Earth with all her pleasant fruits and flowers
Fade, and participate in Man's decline.

XX.

October, 1803.

These times touch monied Worldlings with dismay:
Even rich men, brave by nature, taint the air
With words of apprehension and despair:
While tens of thousands, thinking on the affray,
Men unto whom sufficient for the day
And minds not stinted or untilled are given,
Sound, healthy Children of the God of Heaven,
Are cheerful as the rising Sun in May.
What do we gather hence but firmer faith
That every gift of noble origin
Is breathed upon by Hope's perpetual breath;
That virtue and the faculties within
Are vital, — and that riches are akin
To fear, to change, to cowardice, and death!

XXI.

ENGLAND! the time is come when thou shouldst wean
Thy heart from its emasculating food;
The truth should now be better understood;
Old things have been unsettled; we have seen
Fair seed-time, better harvest might have been
But for thy trespasses; and, at this day,
If for Greece, Egypt, India, Africa,
Aught good were destined, Thou wouldst step between.
England! all nations in this charge agree:
But worse, more ignorant in love and hate
Far, far more abject is thine Enemy:
Therefore the wise pray for thee, though the freight
Of thy offences be a heavy weight:
Oh grief! that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!

XXII.

October, 1803.

When, looking on the present face of things,
I see one Man, of Men the meanest too!
Raised up to sway the World, to do, undo,
With mighty Nations for his Underlings,
The great events with which old story rings
Seem vain and hollow; I find nothing great;
Nothing is left which I can venerate;
So that almost a doubt within me springs
Of Providence, such emptiness at length
Seems at the heart of all things. But, great God!
I measure back the steps which I have trod;
And tremble, seeing, as I do, the strength
Of such poor Instruments, with thoughts sublime
I tremble at the sorrow of the time.

XXIII.

TO THE MEN OF KENT.

October, 1803.

VANGUARD of Liberty, ye Men of Kent,
Ye Children of a Soil that doth advance
Its haughty brow against the coast of France,
Now is the time to prove your hardiment!
To France be words of invitation sent!
They from their Fields can see the countenance
Of your fierce war, may ken the glittering lance,
And hear you shouting forth your brave intent.
Left single, in bold parley, Ye, of yore,
Did from the Norman win a gallant wreath;
Confirmed the charters that were yours before;—
No parleying now! In Britain is one breath;
We all are with you now from Shore to Shore:—
Ye Men of Kent, 'tis Victory or Death!

XXIV.

October, 1803.

Six thousand Veterans practised in War's game,
Tried Men, at Killicranky were arrayed
Against an equal Host that wore the Plaid,
Shepherds and Herdsmen.—Like a whirlwind came
The Highlanders, the slaughter spread like flame;
And Garry, thundering down his mountain-road,
Was stopped, and could not breathe beneath the load
Of the dead bodies.—'Twas a day of shame
For them whom precept and the pedantry
Of cold mechanic battle do enslave.
Oh! for a single hour of that Dundee
Who on that day the word of onset gave!
Like conquest would the Men of England see;
And her Foes find a like inglorious Grave.

XXV.

ANTICIPATION,

October, 1803.

SHOUT, for a mighty Victory is won!
On British ground the Invaders are laid low;
The breath of Heaven has drifted them like snow,
And left them lying in the silent sun,
Never to rise again! — the work is done.
Come forth, ye Old Men, now in peaceful show
And greet your Sons! drums beat and trumpets blow!
Make merry, Wives! ye little children stun
Your Grandame's ears with pleasure of your noise!
Clap, Infants, clap your hands! Divine must be
That triumph, when the very worst, the pain,
And even the prospect of our Brethren slain,
Hath something in it which the heart enjoys: —
In glory will they sleep and endless sanctity.

XXVI.

November, 1806.

ANOTHER year! — another deadly blow!
Another mighty Empire overthrown!
And we are left, or shall be left, alone;
The last that dares to struggle with the Foe.
'Tis well! from this day forward we shall know
That in ourselves our safety must be sought;
That by our own right hands it must be wrought,
That we must stand unpropped, or be laid low.
O Dastard whom such foretaste doth not cheer!
We shall exult, if They who rule the land
Be Men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant; not a servile Band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour which they do not understand.

SONNETS

DEDICATED

TO LIBERTY.

PART SECOND.

I.

ON A CELEBRATED EVENT IN ANCIENT HISTORY.

A ROMAN Master stands on Grecian ground,
And to the Concourse of the Isthmian Games
He, by his Herald's voice, aloud proclaims
THE LIBERTY OF GREECE:—the words rebound
Until all voices in one voice are drowned;
Glad acclamation by which air was rent!
And birds, high flying in the element,
Dropped to the earth, astonished at the sound!
— A melancholy Echo of that noise
Doth sometimes hang on musing Fancy's ear:
Ah! that a *Conqueror's* words should be so dear;
Ah! that a *boon* could shed such rapturous joys!
A gift of that which is not to be given
By all the blended powers of Earth and Heaven.

II.

UPON THE SAME EVENT.

When, far and wide, swift as the beams of morn
The tidings passed of servitude repealed,
And of that joy which shook the Isthmian Field,
The rough Ætolians smiled with bitter scorn.
"'Tis known," cried they, "that He, who would adorn
His envied temples with the Isthmian Crown,
Must either win, through effort of his own,
The prize, or be content to see it worn
By more deserving brows. — Yet so ye prop,
Sons of the Brave who fought at Marathon,
Your feeble Spirits. Greece her head hath bowed,
As if the wreath of Liberty thereon
Would fix itself as smoothly as a cloud,
Which, at Jove's will, descends on Pelion's top!"

III.

TO THOMAS CLARKSON, ON THE FINAL PASSING OF THE BILL FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE, MARCH, 1807.

CLARKSON! it was an obstinate Hill to climb:
How toilsome, nay how dire it was, by Thee
Is known, — by none, perhaps, so feelingly;
But Thou, who, starting in thy fervent prime,
Didst first lead forth this pilgrimage sublime,
Hast heard the constant Voice its charge repeat,
Which, out of thy young heart's oracular seat,
First roused thee. — O true yoke-fellow of Time
With unabating effort, see, the palm
Is won, and by all Nations shall be worn!
The bloody Writing is for ever torn,
And Thou henceforth shalt have a good Man's calm,
A great Man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm Friend of human kind!

IV.

A PROPHECY.

February, 1807.

HIGH deeds, O Germans, are to come from you!
Thus in your Books the record shall be found,
"A Watchword was pronounced, a potent sound,
ARMINIUS! — all the people quaked like dew
Stirred by the breeze — they rose, a Nation, true,
True to herself — the mighty Germany,
She of the Danube and the Northern sea,
She rose, — and off at once the yoke she threw.
All power was given her in the dreadful trance —
Those new-born Kings she withered like a flame."
— Woe to them all! but heaviest woe and shame
To that Bavarian who did first advance
His banner in accursed league with France,
First open Traitor to a sacred name!

V.

COMPOSED WHILE THE AUTHOR WAS ENGAGED IN WRITING A TRACT, OCCASIONED BY THE CONVENTION OF CINTRA, 1808.

NOT 'mid the World's vain objects that enslave
The free-born Soul,—that world whose vaunted skill
In selfish interest perverts the will,
Whose factions lead astray the wise and brave;
Not there! but in dark wood and rocky cave,
And hollow vale which foaming torrents fill
With omnipresent murmur as they rave
Down their steep beds that never shall be still:
Here, mighty Nature!—in this school sublime
I weigh the hopes and fears of suffering Spain:
For her consult the auguries of time,
And through the human heart explore my way,
And look and listen,—gathering where I may,
Triumph, and thoughts no bondage can restrain.

VI.

COMPOSED AT THE SAME TIME AND ON THE SAME OCCASION.

I DROPPED my pen; — and listened to the wind
That sang of trees up-torn and vessels tost;
— A midnight harmony, and wholly lost
To the general sense of men by chains confined
Of business, care, or pleasure, — or resigned
To timely sleep. — Thought I, the impassioned strain,
Which, without aid of numbers, I sustain,
Like acceptation from the World will find.
Yet some with apprehensive ear shall drink
A dirge devoutly breathed o'er sorrows past,
And to the attendant promise will give heed,
The prophecy, — like that of this wild blast,
Which, while it makes the heart with sadness shrink,
Tells also of bright calms that shall succeed.

VII.

HOFFER.

Of mortal Parents is the Hero born
By whom the undaunted Tyrolese are led?
Or is it Tell's great Spirit, from the dead
Returned to animate an age forlorn?
He comes like Phœbus through the gates of morn
When dreary darkness is discomfited:
Yet mark his modest state! — upon his head,
That simple crest — a heron's plume — is worn.
O Liberty! they stagger at the shock;
The Murderers are aghast; they strive to flee
And half their Host is buried: — rock on rock
Descends: — beneath this godlike Warrior, see!
Hills, Torrents, Woods, embodied to bemock
The Tyrant, and confound his cruelty.

VIII.

ADVANCE — come forth from thy Tyrolean ground
Dear Liberty! —stern Nymph of soul untamed,
Sweet Nymph, Oh! rightly of the mountains named!
Through the long chain of Alps from mound to mound
And o'er the eternal snows, like Echo, bound, —
Like Echo, when the Hunter-train at dawn
Have rouzed her from her sleep: and forest-lawn,
Cliffs, woods, and caves her viewless steps resound
And babble of her pastime! — On, dread Power,
With such invisible motion speed thy flight,
Through hanging clouds, from craggy height to height,
Through the green vales and through the Herdsman's bower,
That all the Alps may gladden in thy might,
Here, there, and in all places at one hour.

IX.

FEELINGS OF THE TYROLESE.

THE Land we from our Fathers had in trust,
And to our Children will transmit, or die:
This is our maxim, this our piety;
And God and Nature say that it is just.
That which we *would* perform in arms — we must!
We read the dictate in the Infant's eye;
In the Wife's smile; and in the placid sky;
And, at our feet, amid the silent dust
Of them that were before us. — Sing aloud
Old Songs, the precious music of the heart!
Give, Herds and Flocks! your voices to the wind!
While we go forth, a self-devoted crowd,
With weapons in the fearless hand, to assert
Our virtue, and to vindicate mankind.

X.

Alas! what boots the long, laborious quest
Of moral prudence, sought through good and ill,
Or pains abstruse, to elevate the will,
And lead us on to that transcendant rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason seated on her sovereign hill; —
What is it but a vain and curious skill,
If sapient Germany must lie deprest,
Beneath the brutal sword? — Her haughty Schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules,
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought.

XI.

AND is it among rude untutored Dales,
There, and there only, that the heart is true?
And, rising to repel or to subdue,
Is it by rocks and woods that man prevails?
Ah, no! — though Nature's dread protection fails
There is a bulwark in the *soul.* — This knew
Iberian Burghers when the sword they drew
In Zaragoza, naked to the gales
Of fiercely-breathing war. The truth was felt
By Palafox, and many a brave Compeer,
Like him of noble birth and noble mind;
By Ladies, meek-eyed Women without fear;
And Wanderers of the street, to whom is dealt
The bread which without industry they find.

XII.

O'ER the wide earth, on mountain and on plain,
Dwells in the affections and the soul of man
A Godhead, like the universal PAN,
But more exalted, with a brighter train.
And shall his bounty be dispensed in vain,
Showered equally on City and on Field,
And neither hope nor steadfast promise yield
In these usurping times of fear and pain?
Such doom awaits us. — Nay, forbid it Heaven!
We know the arduous strife, the eternal laws
To which the triumph of all good is given,
High sacrifice, and labour without pause,
Even to the death: — else wherefore should the eye
Of man converse with immortality?

XIII.

ON THE FINAL SUBMISSION OF THE TYROLESE.

It was a *moral* end for which they fought;
Else how, when mighty Thrones were put to shame,
Could they, poor Shepherds, have preserved an aim,
A resolution, or enlivening thought?
Nor hath that moral good been *vainly* sought;
For in their magnanimity and fame
Powers have they left — an impulse — and a claim
Which neither can be overturned nor bought.
Sleep, Warriors, sleep! among your hills repose!
We know that ye, beneath the stern controul
Of awful prudence, keep the unvanquished soul.
And when, impatient of her guilt and woes
Europe breaks forth; then, Shepherds! shall ye rise
For perfect triumph o'er your Enemies.

XIV.

HAIL, Zaragoza! If with unwet eye
We can approach, thy sorrow to behold,
Yet is the heart not pitiless nor cold;
Such spectacle demands not tear or sigh.
These desolate Remains are trophies high
Of more than martial courage in the breast
Of peaceful civic virtue: they attest
Thy matchless worth to all posterity.
Blood flowed before thy sight without remorse;
Disease consumed thy vitals; War upheaved
The ground beneath thee with volcanic force;
Dread trials! yet encountered and sustained
Till not a wreck of help or hope remained,
And Law was from *necessity* received.

XV.

SAY, what is Honour? — 'Tis the finest sense
Of *justice* which the human mind can frame,
Intent each lurking frailty to disclaim,
And guard the way of life from all offence
Suffered or done. When lawless violence
A Kingdom doth assault, and in the scale
Of perilous war her weightiest Armies fail,
Honour is hopeful elevation — whence
Glory — and Triumph. Yet with politic skill
Endangered States may yield to terms unjust,
Stoop their proud heads — but not unto the dust, —
A Foe's most favourite purpose to fulfil!
Happy occasions oft by self-mistrust
Are forfeited; but infamy doth kill.

XVI

THE martial courage of a day is vain —
An empty noise of death the battle's roar —
If vital hope be wanting to restore,
Or fortitude be wanting to sustain,
Armies or Kingdoms. We have heard a strain
Of triumph, how the labouring Danube bore
A weight of hostile corses: drenched with gore
Were the wide fields, the hamlets heaped with slain.
Yet see, the mighty tumult overpast,
Austria a Daughter of her Throne hath sold!
And her Tyrolean Champion we behold
Murdered like one ashore by shipwreck cast,
Murdered without relief. Oh! blind as bold,
To think that such assurance can stand fast!

XVII.

BRAVE Schill! by death delivered, take thy flight
From Prussia's timid region. Go, and rest
With Heroes 'mid the Islands of the Blest,
Or in the Fields of empyrean light.
A meteor wert thou in a darksome night;
Yet shall thy name, conspicuous and sublime,
Stand in the spacious firmament of time,
Fixed as a star: such glory is thy right.
Alas! it may not be: for earthly fame
Is Fortune's frail dependant; yet there lives
A Judge, who, as man claims by merit, gives;
To whose all-pondering mind a noble aim,
Faithfully kept, is as a noble deed;
In whose pure sight all virtue doth succeed.

XVIII.

CALL not the royal Swede unfortunate,
Who never did to Fortune bend the knee;
Who slighted fear, — rejected steadfastly
Temptation; and whose kingly name and state
Have "perished by his choice, and not his fate!"
Hence lives He, to his inner self endeared;
And hence, wherever virtue is revered,
He sits a more exalted Potentate,
Throned in the hearts of men. Should Heaven ordain
That this great Servant of a righteous cause
Must still have sad or vexing thoughts to endure,
Yet may a sympathizing spirit pause,
Admonished by these truths, and quench all pain
In thankful joy and gratulation pure.

XIX.

Look now on that Adventurer who hath paid
His vows to Fortune; who, in cruel slight
Of virtuous hope, of liberty, and right,
Hath followed wheresoe'er a way was made
By the blind Goddess; — ruthless, undismayed;
And so hath gained at length a prosperous Height,
Round which the Elements of worldly might
Beneath his haughty feet, like clouds, are laid.
O joyless power that stands by lawless force!
Curses are *his* dire portion, scorn, and hate,
Internal darkness and unquiet breath;
And, if old judgments keep their sacred course,
Him from that Height shall Heaven precipitate
By violent and ignominious death.

XX.

Is there a Power that can sustain and cheer
The captive Chieftain — by a Tyrant's doom
Forced to descend alive into his tomb,
A dungeon dark! — where he must waste the yea
And lie cut off from all his heart holds dear;
What time his injured Country is a stage
Whereon deliberate Valour and the Rage
Of righteous vengeance side by side appear, —
Filling from morn to night the heroic scene
With deeds of hope and everlasting praise:
Say can he think of this with mind serene
And silent fetters? — Yes, if visions bright
Shine on his soul, reflected from the days
When he himself was tried in open light.

XXI.

1810.

Ah! where is Palafox? Nor tongue nor pen
Reports of him, his dwelling or his grave!
Does yet the unheard-of Vessel ride the wave?
Or is she swallowed up — remote from ken
Of pitying human-nature? Once again
Methinks that we shall hail thee, Champion brave,
Redeemed to baffle that imperial Slave,
And through all Europe cheer desponding men
With new-born hope. Unbounded is the might
Of martyrdom, and fortitude, and right.
Hark, how thy Country triumphs! — Smilingly
The Eternal looks upon her sword that gleams,
Like his own lightning, over mountains high,
On rampart, and the banks of all her streams.

XXII.

In due observance of an ancient rite,
The rude Biscayans, when their Children lie
Dead in the sinless time of infancy,
Attire the peaceful Corse in vestments white;
And, in like sign of cloudless triumph bright,
They bind the unoffending Creature's brows
With happy garlands of the pure white rose:
This done, a festal Company unite
In choral song; and, while the uplifted Cross
Of Jesus goes before, the Child is borne
Uncovered to his grave. — Her piteous loss
The lonesome Mother cannot chuse but mourn;
Yet soon by Christian faith is grief subdued,
And joy attends upon her fortitude.

XXIII.

FEELINGS OF A NOBLE BISCAYAN AT ONE OF THESE FUNERALS. 1810.

YET, yet Biscayans, we must meet our Foes
With firmer soul, — yet labour to regain
Our ancient freedom; else 'twere worse than vain
To gather round the Bier these festal shows!
A garland fashioned of the pure white rose
Becomes not one whose Father is a Slave:
Oh! bear the Infant covered to his Grave!
These venerable mountains now enclose
A People sunk in apathy and fear.
If this endure, farewell, for us, all good!
The awful light of heavenly Innocence
Will fail to illuminate the Infant's bier;
And guilt and shame, from which is no defence,
Descend on all that issues from our blood.

XXIV.

THE OAK OF GUERNICA.

The ancient oak of Guernica, says Laborde in his account of Biscay, is a most venerable natural monument. Ferdinand and Isabella, in the year 1476, after hearing mass in the Church of Santa Maria de la Antigua, repaired to this tree, under which they swore to the Biscayans to maintain their *fueros* (privileges). What other interest belongs to it in the minds of this People will appear from the following

SUPPOSED ADDRESS OF THE SAME. 1810.

Oak of Guernica! Tree of holier power
Than that which in Dodona did enshrine
(So faith too fondly deemed) a voice divine
Heard from the depths of its aërial bower,
How canst thou flourish at this blighting hour?
What hope, what joy can sunshine bring to thee,
Or the soft breezes from the Atlantic sea,
The dews of morn, or April's tender shower?
—— Stroke merciful and welcome would that be
Which should extend thy branches on the ground,
If never more within their shady round
Those lofty-minded Lawgivers shall meet,
Peasant and Lord, in their appointed seat,
Guardians of Biscay's ancient liberty.

XXV.

INDIGNATION OF A HIGH-MINDED SPANIARD. 1810.

We can endure that He should waste our lands,
Despoil our temples, — and by sword and flame
Return us to the dust from which we came;
Such food a Tyrant's appetite demands:
And we can brook the thought that by his hands
Spain may be overpowered, and he possess,
For his delight, a solemn wilderness,
Where all the Brave lie dead. But when of bands,
Which he will break for us, he dares to speak, —
Of benefits, and of a future day
When our enlightened minds shall bless his sway,
Then, the strained heart of fortitude proves weak:
Our groans, our blushes, our pale cheeks declare
That he has power to inflict what we lack strength to bear.

XXVI.

AVAUNT all specious pliancy of mind
In men of low degree, all smooth pretence!
I better like a blunt indifference
And self-respecting slowness, disinclined
To win me at first sight: — and be there joined
Patience and temperance with this high reserve, —
Honour that knows the path and will not swerve;
Affections, which, if put to proof, are kind;
And piety tow'rds God. — Such Men of old
Were England's native growth; and, throughout Spain,
Forests of such do at this day remain;
Then for that Country let our hopes be bold;
For matched with these shall policy prove vain,
Her arts, her strength, her iron, and her gold.

XXVII.

1810.

O'ERWEENING Statesmen have full long relied
On fleets and armies, and external wealth:
But from *within* proceeds a Nation's health;
Which shall not fail, though poor men cleave with pride
To the paternal floor; or turn aside,
In the thronged City, from the walks of gain,
As being all unworthy to detain
A Soul by contemplation sanctified.
There are who cannot languish in this strife,
Spaniards of every rank, by whom the good
Of such high course was felt and understood;
Who to their Country's cause have bound a life,
Ere while by solemn consecration given
To labour, and to prayer, to nature, and to heaven.*

* See Laborde's Character of the Spanish People; from him the sentiment of these two last lines is taken.

XXVIII.

THE FRENCH AND THE SPANISH GUERILLAS.

Hunger, and sultry heat, and nipping blast
From bleak hill-top, and length of march by night
Through heavy swamp, or over snow-clad height,
These hardships ill sustained, these dangers past,
The roving Spanish Bands are reached at last,
Charged, and dispersed like foam: — but as a flight
Of scattered quails by signs do reunite
So these, — and, heard of once again, are chased
With combinations of long practised art
And newly kindled hope; — but they are fled,
Gone are they, viewless as the buried dead;
Where now? — Their sword is at the Foeman's heart!
And thus from year to year his walk they thwart,
And hang like dreams around his guilty bed.

XXIX.

SPANISH GUERILLAS, 1811.

THEY seek, are sought; to daily battle led,
Shrink not, though far out-numbered by their Foes:
For they have learnt to open and to close
The ridges of grim War; and at their head
Are Captains such as erst their Country bred
Or fostered, self-supported Chiefs, — like those
Whom hardy Rome was fearful to oppose,
Whose desperate shock the Carthaginian fled.
In one who lived unknown a Shepherd's life
Redoubted Viriatus breathes again;
And Mina, nourished in the studious shade,
With that great Leader vies, who, sick of strife
And bloodshed, longed in quiet to be laid
In some green Island of the western main.

XXX.

1811.

THE power of Armies is a visible thing,
Formal, and circumscribed in time and place;
But who the limits of that power can trace
Which a brave People into light can bring
Or hide, at will, — for Freedom combating,
By just revenge enflamed? No foot can chase,
No eye can follow to a *fatal* place
That power, that spirit, whether on the wing
Like the strong wind, or sleeping like the wind
Within its awful caves. — From year to year
Springs this indigenous produce far and near;
No craft this subtle element can bind,
Rising like water from the soil, to find
In every nook a lip that it may cheer.

XXXI.

1811.

HERE pause: the Poet claims at least this praise
That virtuous Liberty hath been the scope
Of his pure song, which did not shrink from hope
In the worst moment of these evil days;
From hope, the paramount *duty* that Heaven lays,
For its own honour, on man's suffering heart.
Never may from our souls one truth depart,
That an *accursed* thing it is to gaze
On prosperous Tyrants with a dazzled eye;
Nor, touched with due abhorrence of *their* guilt
For whose dire ends tears flow, and blood is spilt,
And justice labours in extremity,
Forget thy weakness, upon which is built,
O wretched Man, the throne of Tyranny!

COMPOSED IN RECOLLECTION OF THE EXPEDITION OF THE FRENCH INTO RUSSIA.

HUMANITY, delighting to behold
A fond reflection of her own decay,
Hath painted Winter like a Traveller old,
Propped on a staff — and, through the sullen day,
In hooded mantle, limping o'er the Plain,
As though his weakness were disturbed by pain;
Or, if a jaster fancy should allow
An undisputed symbol of command,
The chosen sceptre is a withered bough,
Infirmly grasped within a palsied hand.
These emblems suit the helpless and forlorn;
But mighty Winter the device shall scorn.

For he it was — dread Winter! — who beset,
Flinging round van and rear his ghastly net,
That host, — when from the regions of the Pole
They shrunk, insane ambition's barren goal,

That host, — as hugh and strong as e'er defied
Their God, and placed their trust in human pride!
As Fathers persecute rebellious sons,
He smote the blossoms of their warrior youth;
He called on Frost's inexorable tooth
Life to consume in manhood's firmest hold;
Nor spared the reverend blood that feebly runs, —
For why, unless for liberty enrolled
And sacred home, ah! why should hoary age be
bold?

Fleet the Tartar's reinless steed, —
But fleeter far the pinions of the Wind,
Which from Siberian caves the monarch freed,
And sent him forth, with squadrons of his kind,
And bade the Snow their ample backs bestride,
And to the battle ride; —
No pitying voice commands a halt —
No courage can repel the dire assault, —
Distracted, spiritless, benumbed and blind,
Whole legions sink — and, in one instant, find
Burial and death: look for them — and descry,
When morn returns, beneath the clear blue sky,
A soundless waste, a trackless vacancy!

XXXIII.

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Ye Storms, resound the praises of your King!
And ye mild Seasons — in a sunny clime,
Midway on some high hill, while Father Time
Looks on delighted — meet in festal ring,
And loud and long of Winter's triumph sing!
Sing ye, with blossoms crowned, and fruits, and flowers,
Of Winter's breath surcharged with sleety showers,
And the dire flapping of his hoary wing!
Knit the blithe dance upon the soft green grass;
With feet, hands, eyes, looks, lips, report your gain;
Whisper it to the billows of the main,
And to the aerial zephyrs as they pass,
That old decrepit Winter — *He* hath slain
That Host, which rendered all your bounties vain.

XXXIV.

November, 1813.

Now that all hearts are glad, all faces bright,
Our aged Sovereign sits;—to the ebb and flow
Of states and kingdoms, to their joy or woe
Insensible;—he sits deprived of sight,
And lamentably wrapped in twofold night,
Whom no weak hopes deceived; whose mind ensued,
Through perilous war, with regal fortitude,
Peace that should claim respect from lawless Might.
Dread King of Kings, vouchsafe a ray divine
To his forlorn condition! let thy grace
Upon his inner soul in mercy shine;
Permit his heart to kindle, and embrace
(Though were it only for a moment's space)
The triumphs of this hour; for they are THINE!

XXXV.

ON THE DISINTERMENT OF THE REMAINS OF THE DUKE D'ENGHIEN.

DEAR Reliques! from a pit of vilest mold
Uprisen — to lodge among ancestral kings;
And to inflict shame's salutary stings
On the remorseless hearts of men grown old
In a blind worship; men perversely bold
Even to this hour; yet at this hour they quake;
And some their monstrous Idol shall forsake,
If, to the living, truth was ever told
By aught surrendered from the hollow grave:
O murdered Prince! meek, loyal, pious, brave!
The power of retribution once was given;
But 'tis a rueful thought that willow-bands
So often tie the thunder-wielding hands
Of Justice, sent to earth from highest Heaven!

XXXVI.

OCCASIONED BY THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

(*The last six lines intended for an Inscription.*)

February, 1816.

INTREPID sons of Albion! — not by you
Is life despised! — Ah no — the spacious earth
Ne'er saw a race who held, by right of birth,
So many objects to which love is due:
Ye slight not life — to God and Nature true;
But death, becoming death, is dearer far,
When duty bids you bleed in open war:
Hence hath your prowess quelled that impious crew.
Heroes! for instant sacrifice prepared,
Yet filled with ardour, and on triumph bent,
Mid direst shocks of mortal accident,
To you who fell, and you whom slaughter spared,
To guard the fallen, and consummate the event,
Your Country rears this sacred Monument!

XXXVII.

OCCASIONED BY THE SAME BATTLE.

February, 1816.

THE Bard, whose soul is meek as dawning day,
Yet trained to judgments righteously severe;
Fervid, yet conversant with holy fear,
As recognizing one Almighty sway:
He whose experienced eye can pierce the array
Of past events, — to whom, in vision clear,
The aspiring heads of future things appear,
Like mountain-tops whose mists have rolled away:
Assoiled from all incumbrance of our time, *
He only, if such breathe, in strains devout
Shall comprehend this victory sublime;
And worthily rehearse the hideous rout,
Which the blest Angels, from their peaceful clime
Beholding, welcomed with a choral shout.

* "From all this world's encumbrance did himself assoil."
Spenser.

XXXVIII.

February, 1816.

O, FOR a kindling touch of that pure flame
Which taught the offering of song to rise
From thy lone bower, beneath Italian skies,
Great FILICAIA! — With celestial aim
It rose, — thy saintly rapture to proclaim,
Then, when the imperial city stood released
From bondage threatened by the embattled East,
And Christendom respired; from guilt and shame
Redeemed, — from miserable fear set free
By one day's feat — one mighty victory.
— Chaunt the Deliverer's praise in every tongue!
The cross shall spread, — the crescent hath waxed dim, —
He conquering — ás in Earth and Heaven was sung —
HE CONQUERING THROUGH GOD, AND GOD BY HIM.*

* Ond' è ch' Io grido e griderò: giugnesti,
Guerregiasti, è vincesti;
Si, si, vincesti, o Campion forte e pio,
Per Dio vincesti, e per te vinse Iddio.

See Filicaia's Canzone, addressed to John Sobieski, king of Poland, upon his raising the siege of Vienna. This, and his other poems on the same occasion, are superior perhaps to any lyrical pieces that contemporary events have ever given birth to, those of the Hebrew Scriptures only excepted.

ODE

COMPOSED IN JANUARY, 1816.

——— Carmina possumus
Donare, et pretium dicere muneri.
Non incisa notis marmora publicis,
Per quæ spiritus et vita redit bonis
Post mortem ducibus
——————— clarius indicant
Laudes, quam ——— Pierides; neque,
Si chartæ sileant quod bene feceris,
Mercedem tuleris. —— Hor. Car. 8. Lib. 4.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It is not to bespeak favour or indulgence, but to guard against misapprehension, that the author presumes to state that the present publication owes its existence to a patriotism, anxious to exert itself in commemorating that course of action, by which Great Britain has, for some time past, distinguished herself above all other countries.

Wholly unworthy of touching upon so momentous a subject would that Poet be, before whose eyes the present distresses under which this kingdom labours, could interpose a veil sufficiently thick to hide, or even to obscure the splendor of this great moral triumph. If the author has given way to exultation, unchecked by these distresses, it might be sufficient to protect him from a charge of insensibility, should he state his own belief that these sufferings will be transitory. On the wisdom of a very large majority of the British nation, rested that generosity which poured out the treasures of

this country for the deliverance of Europe: and in the same national wisdom, presiding in time of peace over an energy not inferior to that which has been displayed in war, *they* confide, who encourage a firm hope, that the cup of our wealth will be gradually replenished. There will, doubtless, be no few ready to indulge in regrets and repinings; and to feed a morbid satisfaction, by aggravating these burthens in imagination, in order that calamity so confidently prophesied, as it has not taken the shape which their sagacity allotted to it, may appear as grievous as possible under another. But the body of the nation will not quarrel with the gain, because it might have been purchased at a less price: and acknowledging in these sufferings, which they feel to have been in a great degree unavoidable, a consecration of their noble efforts, they will vigorously apply themselves to remedy the evil.

Nor is it at the expense of rational patriotism, or in disregard of sound philosophy, that the author hath given vent to feelings tending to encourage a martial spirit in the bosoms of his countrymen, at a time when there is a general outcry against

the prevalence of these dispositions. The British army, both by its skill and valour in the field, and by the discipline which has rendered it much less formidable than the armies of other powers, to the inhabitants of the several countries where its operations were carried on, has performed services for humanity too important and too obvious to allow any one to recommend, that the language of gratitude and admiration be suppressed, or restrained (whatever be the temper of the public mind) through a scrupulous dread, lest the tribute due to the past, should prove an injurious incentive for the future. Every man deserving the name of Briton, adds his voice to the chorus which extols the exploits of his countrymen, with a consciousness, at times overpowering the effort, that they transcend all praise. — But this particular sentiment, thus irresistibly excited, is not sufficient. The nation would err grievously, if she suffered the abuse which other states have made of military power, to prevent her from perceiving that no people ever was, or can be, independent, free, or secure, much less great in any sane application of the word, without martial propensities, and an assiduous cultivation of

military virtues. Nor let it be overlooked, that the benefits derivable from these sources, are placed within the reach of Great Britain, under conditions peculiarly favourable. The same insular position which by rendering territorial incorporation impossible, utterly precludes the desire of conquest under the most seductive shape it can assume, enables her to rely, for her defence against foreign foes, chiefly upon a species of armed force from which her own liberties have nothing to fear. Such are the privileges of her situation; and, by permitting, they invite her to give way to the courageous instincts of human nature, and to strengthen and to refine them by culture. But some have more than insinuated, that a design exists to subvert the civil character of the English people by unconstitutional applications and unnecessary increase of military power. The advisers and abettors of such a design, were it possible that it should exist, would be guilty of the most heinous crime, which, upon this planet, can be committed. The author, trusting that this apprehension arises from the delusive influences of an honourable jealousy, hopes that the martial qualities, which he venerates, will be fostered by

adhering to those good old usages which experience has sanctioned; and by availing ourselves of new means of indisputable promise; particularly by applying, in its utmost possible extent, that system of tuition, of which the master-spring is a habit of gradually enlightened subordination; — by imparting knowledge, civil, moral, and religious, in such measure that the mind, among all classes of the community, may love, admire, and be prepared and accomplished to defend that country, under whose protection its faculties have been unfolded, and its riches acquired; by just dealing towards all orders of the state, so that no members of it being trampled upon, courage may every where continue to rest immoveably upon its ancient English foundation, personal self-respect; — by adequate rewards, and permanent honours, conferred upon the deserving; by encouraging athletic exercises and manly sports among the peasantry of the country; and by especial care to provide and support sufficient Institutions, in which, during a time of peace, a reasonable proportion of the youth of the country may be instructed in military science.

The author has only to add that he should feel little satisfaction in giving to the world these limited attempts * to celebrate the virtues of his country, if he did not encourage a hope that a subject, which it has fallen within his province to treat only in the mass, will by other poets be illustrated in that detail which its importance calls for, and which will allow opportunities to give the merited applause to PERSONS as well as to THINGS.

W. WORDSWORTH.

Rydal Mount,
March 18, 1816.

* The Ode was published along with other pieces, now interspersed through these volumes.

ODE.

THE MORNING OF THE DAY APPOINTED FOR A GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

January 18, 1816.

I.

HAIL, universal Source of pure delight!
Thou that canst shed the bliss of gratitude
On hearts howe'er insensible or rude;
Whether thy orient visitations smite
The haughty towers where monarchs dwell;
Or thou, impartial Sun, with presence bright
Cheer'st the low threshold of the Peasant's cell!
— Not unrejoiced I see thee climb the sky
In naked splendour, clear from mist or haze,
Or cloud approaching to divert the rays,
Which even in deepest winter testify
Thy power and majesty,
Dazzling the vision that presumes to gaze.

—Well does thine aspect usher in this Day;
As aptly suits therewith that timid pace,
Framed in subjection to the chains
That bind thee to the path which God ordains
That thou shalt trace,
Till, with the heavens and earth, thou pass away!
Nor less the stillness of these frosty plains,
Their utter stillness, and the silent grace
Of yon etherial summits white with snow,
(Whose tranquil pomp, and spotless purity,
Report of storms gone by
To us who tread below)
Do with the service of this Day accord.
—Divinest object, which the uplifted eye
Of mortal man is suffered to behold;
Thou, who upon yon snow-clad Heights hast poured
Meek splendour, nor forget'st the humble Vale,
Thou who dost warm Earth's universal mould,—
And for thy bounty wert not unadored
By pious men of old;
Once more, heart-cheering Sun, I bid thee hail!
Bright be thy course to day, let not this promise fail!

II.

'Mid the deep quiet of this morning hour,
All nature seems to hear me while I speak, —
By feelings urged, that do not vainly seek
Apt language, ready as the tuneful notes
That stream in blithe succession from the throats
Of birds in leafy bower,
Warbling a farewell to a vernal shower.
— There is a radiant but a short-lived flame,
That burns for Poets in the dawning East; —
And oft my soul hath kindled at the same,
When the captivity of sleep had ceased;
But he who fixed immoveably the frame
Of the round world, and built, by laws as strong,
A solid refuge for distress,
The towers of righteousness;
He knows that from a holier altar came
The quickening spark of this day's sacrifice;
Knows that the source is nobler whence doth rise
The current of this matin song;
That deeper far it lies
Than aught dependant on the fickle skies.

III.

Have we not conquered? — By the vengeful sword?
Ah no, by dint of Magnanimity;
That curbed the baser passions, and left free
A loyal band to follow their liege Lord,
Clear-sighted Honour — and his staid Compeers,
Along a track of most unnatural years,
In execution of heroic deeds;
Whose memory, spotless as the crystal beads
Of morning dew upon the untrodden meads,
Shall live enrolled above the starry spheres.
— Who to the murmurs of an earthly string
Of Britain's acts would sing,
He with enraptured voice will tell
Of One whose spirit no reverse could quell;
Of One that mid the failing never failed:
Who paints how Britain struggled and prevailed,
Shall represent her labouring with an eye
Of circumspect humanity;
Shall shew her clothed with strength and skill,
All martial duties to fulfil;

Firm as a rock in stationary fight;
In motion rapid as the lightning's gleam;
Fierce as a flood-gate bursting in the night
To rouse the wicked from their giddy dream —
Woe, woe to all that face her in the field!
Appalled she may not be, and cannot yield.

IV.

And thus is missed the sole true glory
That can belong to human story!
At which *they* only shall arrive
Who through the abyss of weakness dive.
The very humblest are too proud of heart:
And one brief day is rightly set apart
To Him who lifteth up and layeth low;
For that Almighty God to whom we owe,
Say not that we have vanquished — but that we survive.

V.

How dreadful the dominion of the impure!
Why should the song be tardy to proclaim
That less than power unbounded could not tame

That Soul of Evil — which, from Hell let loose,
Had filled the astonished world with such abuse,
As boundless patience only could endure?
— Wide-wasted regions — cities wrapped in flame —
Who sees, and feels, may lift a streaming eye
To Heaven, — who never saw may heave a sigh;
But the foundation of our nature shakes,
And with an infinite pain the spirit aches,
When desolated countries, towns on fire,
Are but the avowed attire
Of warfare waged with desperate mind
Against the life of virtue in mankind;
Assaulting without ruth
The citadels of truth;
While the old forest of civility
Is doomed to perish, to the last fair tree!

VI.

A crouching purpose — a distracted will —
Opposed to hopes that battened upon scorn,
And to desires whose ever-waxing horn
Not all the light of earthly power could fill;
Opposed to dark, deep plots of patient skill,

And the celerities of lawless force;
Which, spurning God, had flung away remorse —
What could they gain but shadows of redress?
— So bad proceeded propagating worse;
And discipline was passion's dire excess. *
Widens the fatal web — its lines extend,
And deadlier poisons in the chalice blend —
When will your trials teach you to be wise?
— O prostrate Lands, consult your agonies!

VII.

No more — the guilt is banished,
And, with the Guilt, the Shame is fled;
And, with the Guilt and Shame, the Woe hath vanished,
Shaking the dust and ashes from her head!
— No more — these lingerings of distress
Sully the limpid stream of thankfulness.
What robe can Gratitude employ
So seemly as the radiant vest of Joy?

* "A discipline the rule whereof is passion."—Lord Brook.

What steps so suitable as those that move
In prompt obedience to spontaneous measures
Of glory — and felicity — and love,
Surrendering the whole heart to sacred pleasures?

VIII.

Land of our fathers! precious unto me
Since the first joys of thinking infancy;
When of thy gallant chivalry I read,
And hugged the volume on my sleepless bed!
O England! — dearer far than life is dear,
If I forget thy prowess, never more
Be thy ungrateful Son allowed to hear
Thy green leaves rustle, or thy torrents roar!
But how can *He* be faithless to the past,
Whose soul, intolerant of base decline,
Saw in thy virtue a celestial sign,
That bade him hope, and to his hope cleave fast!
The Nations strove with puissance; — at length
Wide Europe heaved, impatient to be cast,
With *all* her living strength,
With *all* her armed Powers,
Upon the offensive shores.

The trumpet blew a universal blast!
But Thou art foremost in the field; — there stand:
Receive the triumph destined to thy Hand!
All States have glorified themselves; — their claims
Are weighed by Providence, in balance even;
And now, in preference to the mightiest names,
To Thee the exterminating sword is given.
Dread mark of approbation, justly gained!
Exalted office, worthily sustained!

IX.

Imagination, ne'er before content,
But aye ascending, restless in her pride,
From all that man's performance could present,
Stoops to that closing deed magnificent,
And with the embrace is satisfied.
— Fly, ministers of Fame,
Whate'er your means, whatever help ye claim,
Bear through the world these tidings of delight!
— Hours, Days, and Months, have borne them, in the sight

Of mortals, travelling faster than the shower,
That land-ward stretches from the sea,
The morning's splendors to devour;
But *this* appearance scattered extacy,
And heart-sick Europe blessed the healing power.
— *The shock is given — the Adversaries bleed —*
Lo, Justice triumphs! Earth is freed!
Such glad assurance suddenly went forth —
It pierced the caverns of the sluggish North —
It found no barrier on the ridge
Of Andes — frozen gulphs became its bridge —
The vast Pacific gladdens with the freight —
Upon the Lakes of Asia 'tis bestowed —
The Arabian desart shapes a willing road,
Across her burning breast,
For this refreshing incense from the West!
— Where snakes and lions breed,
Where towns and cities thick as stars appear,
Wherever fruits are gathered, and where'er
The upturned soil receives the hopeful seed —
While the Sun rules, and cross the shades of night —
The unwearied arrow hath pursued its flight!

The eyes of good men thankfully give heed,
And in its sparkling progress read
How virtue triumphs, from her bondage freed!
Tyrants exult to hear of kingdoms won,
And slaves are pleased to learn that mighty feats are done;
Even the proud Realm, from whose distracted borders
This messenger of good was launched in air,
France, conquered France, amid her wild disorders,
Feels, and hereafter shall the truth declare,
That she too lacks not reason to rejoice,
And utter England's name with sadly-plausive voice.

X.

Preserve, O Lord! within our hearts
The memory of thy favour,
That else insensibly departs,
And loses its sweet savour!
Lodge it within us! — as the power of light
Lives inexhaustibly in precious gems,
Fixed on the front of Eastern diadems,
So shine our thankfulness for ever bright!

What offering, what transcendant monument
Shall our sincerity to Thee present?
— Not work of hands; but trophies that may reach
To highest Heaven — the labour of the soul;
That builds, as thy unerring precepts teach,
Upon the inward victories of each,
Her hope of lasting glory for the whole.
— Yet might it well become that City now,
Into whose breast the tides of grandeur flow,
To whom all persecuted men retreat;
If a new Temple lift her votive brow
Upon the shore of silver Thames — to greet
The peaceful guest advancing from afar?
Bright be the distant Fabric, as a star
Fresh risen — and beautiful within! — there meet
Dependance infinite, proportion just;
— A pile that grace approves, and time can trust.

XI.

But if the valiant of this land
In reverential modesty demand,
That all observance, due to them, be paid
Where their serene progenitors are laid;

Kings, warriors, high-souled poets, saint-like sages,
England's illustrious sons of long, long ages;
Be it not unordained that solemn rites,
Within the circuit of those gothic walls,
Shall be performed at pregnant intervals;
Commemoration holy that unites
The living generations with the dead;
By the deep soul-moving sense
Of religious eloquence, —
By visual pomp, and by the tie
Of sweet and threatening harmony;
Soft notes, awful as the omen
Of destructive tempests coming,
And escaping from that sadness
Into elevated gladness;
While the white-robed choir attendant,
Under mouldering banners pendant,
Provoke all potent symphonies to raise
Songs of victory and praise,
For them who bravely stood unhurt — or bled
With medicable wounds, or found their graves
Upon the battle field — or under ocean's waves;

Or were conducted home in single state,
And long procession — there to lie,
Where their sons' sons, and all posterity,
Unheard by them, their deeds shall celebrate!

XII.

Nor will the God of peace and love
Such martial service disapprove.
He guides the Pestilence — the cloud
Of locusts travels on his breath;
The region that in hope was ploughed
His drought consumes, his mildew taints with death;
He springs the hushed Volcano's mine;
He puts the Earthquake on her still design,
Darkens the sun, hath bade the forest sink,
And, drinking towns and cities, still can drink
Cities and towns — 'tis Thou — the work is Thine!
— The fierce Tornado sleeps within thy courts —
He hears the word — he flies —
And navies perish in their ports;
For Thou art angry with thine enemies!
For these, and for our errors
And sins, that point their terrors,

We bow our heads before Thee, and we laud
And magnify thy name, Almighty God!
But thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is Man — arrayed for mutual slaughter, —
Yea, Carnage is thy daughter!
Thou cloth'st the wicked in their dazzling mail,
And by thy just permission they prevail;
Thine arm from peril guards the coasts
Of them who in thy laws delight:
Thy presence turns the scale of doubtful fight,
Tremendous God of battles, Lord of Hosts!

XIII.

To Thee — to Thee —
On this appointed Day shall thanks ascend,
That Thou hast brought our warfare to an end,
And that we need no second victory!
Ha! what a ghastly sight for man to see;
And to the heavenly saints in peace who dwell,
For a brief moment, terrible;
But to thy sovereign penetration fair,
Before whom all things are, that were,

All judgments that have been, or e'er shall be;
Links in the chain of thy tranquillity!
Along the bosom of this favoured Nation,
Breathe thou, this day, a vital undulation!
Let all who do this land inherit
Be conscious of Thy moving spirit!
Oh, 'tis a goodly Ordinance, — the sight,
Though sprung from bleeding war, is one of pure delight;
Bless thou the hour, or ere the hour arrive,
When a whole people shall kneel down in prayer,
And, at one moment, in one spirit, strive
With lip and heart to tell their gratitude
For thy protecting care,
Their solemn joy — praising the Eternal Lord
For tyranny subdued,
And for the sway of equity renewed,
For liberty confirmed, and peace restored!

XIV.

But hark — the summons! — down the placid Lake
Floats the soft cadence of the Church-tower bells;
Bright shines the Sun, as if his beams might wake
The tender insects sleeping in their cells;

Bright shines the Sun — and not a breeze to shake
The drops that point the melting icicles: —
O, enter now his temple gate!
Inviting words — perchance already flung,
(As the crowd press devoutly down the aisle
Of some old minster's venerable pile)
From voices into zealous passion stung,
While the tubed engine feels the inspiring blast,
And has begun — its clouds of sound to cast
Towards the empyreal Heaven,
As if the fretted roof were riven.
Us, humbler ceremonies now await;
But in the bosom, with devout respect,
The banner of our joy we will erect,
And strength of love our souls shall elevate:
For to a few collected in his name,
Their heavenly Father will incline his ear,
Hallowing himself the service which they frame; —
Awake! the majesty of God revere!
Go — and with foreheads meekly bowed
Present your prayers — go — and rejoice aloud —
The Holy One will hear!
And what, 'mid silence deep, with faith sincere,

Ye, in your low and undisturbed estate,
Shall simply feel and purely meditate
Of warnings — from the unprecedented might,
Which, in our time, the impious have disclosed;
And of more arduous duties thence imposed
Upon the future advocates of right;
Of mysteries revealed,
And judgments unrepealed, —
Of earthly revolution,
And final retribution, —
To his omniscience will appear
An offering not unworthy to find place,
On this high DAY of THANKS, before the Throne of Grace!

ESSAY;

SUPPLEMENT TO THE PREFACE.

With the young, of both sexes, Poetry is, like love, a passion; but, for much the greater part of those who have been proud of its power over their minds, a necessity soon arises of breaking the pleasing bondage; or it relaxes of itself;—the thoughts being occupied in domestic cares, or the time engrossed by business. Poetry then becomes only an occasional recreation; while to those whose existence passes away in a course of fashionable pleasure, it is a species of luxurious amusement.—In middle and declining age, a scattered number of serious persons resort to poetry, as to religion, for a protection against the pressure of trivial employments, and as a consolation for the afflictions of life. And lastly, there are many, who, having been enamoured of this art, in their youth, have found leisure, after youth was spent, to cultivate general literature; in which poetry has continued to be comprehended *as a study*.

Into the above Classes the Readers of poetry may be divided; Critics abound in them all; but from the last

only can opinions be collected of absolute value, and worthy to be depended upon, as prophetic of the destiny of a new work. The young, who in nothing can escape delusion, are especially subject to it in their intercourse with poetry. The cause, not so obvious as the fact is unquestionable, is the same as that from which erroneous judgments in this art, in the minds of men of all ages, chiefly proceed; but upon Youth it operates with peculiar force. The appropriate business of poetry (which, nevertheless, if genuine is as permanent as pure science) her appropriate employment, her privilege and her *duty*, is to treat of things not as they *are*, but as they *appear*; not as they exist in themselves, but as they *seem* to exist to the *senses* and to the *passions*. What a world of delusion does this acknowledged principle prepare for the inexperienced! what temptations to go astray are here held forth for those whose thoughts have been little disciplined by the understanding, and whose feelings revolt from the sway of reason! — When a juvenile Reader is in the height of his rapture with some vicious passage, should experience throw in doubts, or common-sense suggest suspicions, a lurking consciousness that the realities of the Muse are but shows, and that her liveliest excitements are raised by transient shocks of conflicting feeling and successive assemblages of contradictory thoughts — is ever at hand to justify extravagance, and to sanction absurdity. But, it may be asked, as these illusions are unavoidable, and, no doubt, eminently useful to the mind as a process, what good can be gained by making observations the

tendency of which is to diminish the confidence of youth in its feelings, and thus to abridge its innocent and even profitable pleasures? The reproach implied in the question could not be warded off, if Youth were incapable of being delighted with what is truly excellent; or, if these errors always terminated of themselves in due season. But, with the majority, though their force be abated, they continue through life. Moreover, the fire of youth is too vivacious an element to be extinguished or damped by a philosophical remark; and, while there is no danger that what has been said will be injurious or painful to the ardent and the confident, it may prove beneficial to those who, being enthusiastic, are, at the same time, modest and ingenuous. The intimation may unite with their own misgivings to regulate their sensibility, and to bring in, sooner than it would otherwise have arrived, a more discreet and sound judgment.

If it should excite wonder that men of ability, in later life, whose understandings have been rendered acute by practice in affairs, should be so easily and so far imposed upon when they happen to take up a new work in verse, this appears to be the cause;—that, having discontinued their attention to poetry, whatever progress may have been made in other departments of knowledge, they have not, as to this art, advanced in true discernment beyond the age of youth. If then a new poem falls in their way, whose attractions are of that kind which would have enraptured them during the heat of youth, the judgment

not being improved to a degree that they shall be disgusted, they are dazzled; and prize and cherish the faults for having had power to make the present time vanish before them, and to throw the mind back, as by enchantment, into the happiest season of life. As they read, powers seem to be revived, passions are regenerated, and pleasures restored. The Book was probably taken up after an escape from the burthen of business, and with a wish to forget the world, and all its vexations and anxieties. Having obtained this wish, and so much more, it is natural that they should make report as they have felt.

If Men of mature age, through want of practice, be thus easily beguiled into admiration of absurdities, extravagances, and misplaced ornaments, thinking it proper that their understandings should enjoy a holiday, while they are unbending their minds with verse, it may be expected that such Readers will resemble their former selves also in strength of prejudice, and an inaptitude to be moved by the unostentatious beauties of a pure style. In the higher poetry, an enlightened Critic chiefly looks for a reflexion of the wisdom of the heart and the grandeur of the imagination. Wherever these appear, simplicity accompanies them; Magnificence herself, when legitimate, depending upon a simplicity of her own, to regulate her ornaments. But it is a well known property of human nature that our estimates are ever governed by comparisons, of which we are conscious with various de-

grees of distinctness. Is it not, then, inevitable (confining these observations to the effects of style merely) that an eye, accustomed to the glaring hues of diction by which such Readers are caught and excited, will for the most part be rather repelled than attracted by an original Work, the colouring of which is disposed according to a pure and refined scheme of harmony? It is in the fine arts as in the affairs of life, no man can *serve* (i. e. obey with zeal and fidelity) two Masters.

As Poetry is most just to its own divine origin when it administers the comforts and breathes the spirit of religion, they who have learned to perceive this truth, and who betake themselves to reading verse for sacred purposes, must be preserved from numerous illusions to which the two Classes of Readers, whom we have been considering, are liable. But, as the mind grows serious from the weight of life, the range of its passions is contracted accordingly; and its sympathies become so exclusive that many species of high excellence wholly escape, or but languidly excite, its notice. Besides, Men who read from religious or moral inclinations, even when the subject is of that kind which they approve, are beset with misconceptions and mistakes peculiar to themselves. Attaching so much importance to the truths which interest them, they are prone to overrate the Authors by whom these truths are expressed and enforced. They come prepared to impart so much passion to the Poet's language, that they remain unconscious how little, in fact, they re-

ceive from it. And, on the other hand, religious faith is to him who holds it so momentous a thing, and error appears to be attended with such tremendous consequences, that, if opinions touching upon religion occur which the Reader condemns, he not only cannot sympathize with them however animated the expression, but there is, for the most part, an end put to all satisfaction and enjoyment. Love, if it before existed, is converted into dislike; and the heart of the Reader is set against the Author and his book. — To these excesses, they, who from their professions ought to be the most guarded against them, are perhaps the most liable; I mean those sects whose religion, being from the calculating understanding, is cold and formal. For when Christianity, the religion of humility, is founded upon the proudest faculty of our nature, what can be expected but contradictions? Accordingly, believers of this cast are at one time contemptuous; at another, being troubled as they are and must be with inward misgivings, they are jealous and suspicious; — and at all seasons, they are under temptation to supply, by the heat with which they defend their tenets, the animation which is wanting to the constitution of the religion itself.

Faith was given to man that his affections, detached from the treasures of time, might be inclined to settle upon those of eternity: — the elevation of his nature, which this habit produces on earth, being to him a presumptive evidence of a future state of existence; and giving him a title to partake of its holiness. The religious

man values what he sees chiefly as an "imperfect shadowing forth" of what he is incapable of seeing. The concerns of religion refer to indefinite objects, and are too weighty for the mind to support them without relieving itself by resting a great part of the burthen upon words and symbols. The commerce between Man and his Maker cannot be carried on but by a process where much is represented in little, and the infinite Being accommodates himself to a finite capacity. In all this may be perceived the affinity between religion and poetry; — between religion — making up the deficiencies of reason by faith and poetry — passionate for the instruction of reason; between religion — whose element is infinitude, and whose ultimate trust is the supreme of things, submitting herself to circumscription and reconciled to substitutions; and poetry — etherial and transcendant, yet incapable to sustain her existence without sensuous incarnation. In this community of nature may be perceived also the lurking incitements of kindred error; — so that we shall find that no poetry has been more subject to distortion, than that species the argument and scope of which is religious; and no lovers of the art have gone further astray than the pious and the devout.

Whither then shall we turn for that union of qualifications which must necessarily exist before the decisions of a critic can be of absolute value? For a mind at once poetical and philosophical; for a critic whose affections are as free and kindly as the spirit of society, and whose

understanding is severe as that of dispassionate government? Where are we to look for that initiatory composure of mind which no selfishness can disturb? For a natural sensibility that has been tutored into correctness without losing any thing of its quickness; and for active faculties capable of answering the demands which an Author of original imagination shall make upon them,—associated with a judgment that cannot be duped into admiration by aught that is unworthy of it? — Among those and those only, who, never having suffered their youthful love of poetry to remit much of its force, have applied to the consideration of the laws of this art, the best power of their understandings. At the same time it must be observed — that, as this Class comprehends the only judgments which are trust-worthy, so does it include the most erroneous and perverse. For to be mis-taught is worse than to be untaught; and no perverseness equals that which is supported by system, no errors are so difficult to root out as those which the understanding has pledged its credit to uphold. In this Class are contained Censors, who, if they be pleased with what is good, are pleased with it only by imperfect glimpses, and upon false principles; who, should they generalize rightly to a certain point, are sure to suffer for it in the end; — who, if they stumble upon a sound rule, are fettered by misapplying it, or by straining it too far; being incapable of perceiving when it ought to yield to one of higher order. In it are found Critics too petulant to be passive to a genuine Poet, and too feeble to grapple with him; Men,

who take upon them to report of the course which *he* holds whom they are utterly unable to accompany,— confounded if he turn quick upon the wing, dismayed if he soar steadily "into the region;"—Men of palsied imaginations and indurated hearts; in whose minds all healthy action is languid,—who, therefore, feed as the many direct them, or with the many, are greedy after vicious provocatives;—Judges, whose censure is auspicious, and whose praise ominous! In this class meet together the two extremes of best and worst.

The observations presented in the foregoing series, are of too ungracious a nature to have been made without reluctance; and, were it only on this account, I would invite the reader to try them by the test of comprehensive experience. If the number of judges who can be confidently relied upon be in reality so small, it ought to follow that partial notice only, or neglect, perhaps long continued, or attention wholly inadequate to their merits —must have been the fate of most works in the higher departments of poetry; and that, on the other hand, numerous productions have blazed into popularity, and have passed away, leaving scarcely a trace behind them: —it will be, further found that when Authors have, at length, raised themselves into general admiration and maintained their ground, errors and prejudices have prevailed concerning their genius and their works, which the few who are conscious of those errors and prejudices would deplore; if they were not recompensed by per-

ceiving that there are select Spirits for whom it is ordained that their fame shall be in the world an existence like that of Virtue, which owes its being to the struggles it makes, and its vigour to the enemies whom it provokes;—a vivacious quality ever doomed to meet with opposition, and still triumphing over it; and, from the nature of its dominion, incapable of being brought to the sad conclusion of Alexander, when he wept that there were no more worlds for him to conquer.

Let us take a hasty retrospect of the poetical literature of this Country for the greater part of the last two Centuries, and see if the facts support these inferences.

Who is there that can now endure to read the "Creation" of Dubartes? Yet all Europe once resounded with his praise; he was caressed by Kings; and, when his Poem was translated into our language, the Faery Queen faded before it. The name of Spenser, whose genius is of a higher order than even that of Ariosto, is at this day scarcely known beyond the limits of the British Isles. And, if the value of his works is to be estimated from the attention now paid to them by his Countrymen, compared with that which they bestow on those of some other writers, it must be pronounced small indeed.

> "The laurel meed of mighty Conquerors
> And Poets *sage*"—

are his own words; but his wisdom has, in this particular, been his worst enemy; while its opposite, whether in the shape of folly or madness, has been their best friend. But

he was a great power; and bears a high name: the laurel has been awarded to him.

A Dramatic Author, if he write for the Stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the Audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakespeare was listened to. The people were delighted; but I am not sufficiently versed in Stage antiquities to determine whether they did not flock as eagerly to the representation of many pieces of contemporary Authors, wholly undeserving to appear upon the same boards. Had there been a formal contest for superiority among dramatic Writers, that Shakespeare, like his predecessors, Sophocles and Euripides, would have often been subject to the mortification of seeing the prize adjudged to sorry competitors, becomes too probable, when we reflect that the Admirers of Settle and Shadwell were, in a later age, as numerous, and reckoned as respectable in point of talent as those of Dryden. At all events, that Shakespeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius, is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepossessions of the age compelled him to make use of. Yet even this marvellous skill appears not to have been enough to prevent his rivals from having some advantage over him in public estimation; else how can we account for passages and scenes that exist in his works, unless upon a supposition that some of the grossest of them, a fact which

in my own mind I have no doubt of, were foisted in by the Players, for the gratification of the many?

But that his Works, whatever might be their reception upon the stage, made little impression upon the ruling Intellects of the time, may be inferred from the fact that Lord Bacon, in his multifarious writings, no where either quotes or alludes to him.* — His dramatic excellence enabled him to resume possession of the stage after the Restoration; but Dryden tells us that in his time two of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher were acted for one of Shakespeare. And so faint and limited was the perception of the poetic beauties of his dramas in the time of Pope, that, in his Edition of the Plays, with a view of rendering to the general Reader a necessary service, he printed between inverted commas those passages which he thought most worthy of notice.

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: "the English with their Buffon de Shakespeare" is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to

* The learned Hakewill (a 3d edition of whose book bears date 1635) writing to refute the error "touching Nature's perpetual and universal decay," cites triumphantly the names of Ariosto, Tasso, Bartas, and Spenser, as instances that poetic genius had not degenerated; but he makes no mention of Shakespeare.

have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French Theatre; an advantage which the Parisian Critic owed to his German blood, and German education. The most enlightened Italians, though well acquainted with our language, are wholly incompetent to measure the proportions of Shakespeare. The Germans only, of foreign nations, are approaching towards a knowledge and feeling of what he is. In some respects they have acquired a superiority over the fellow-countrymen of the Poet; for among us it is a current, I might say, an established opinion that Shakespeare is justly praised when he is pronounced to be "a wild irregular genius, in whom great faults are compensated by great beauties." How long may it be before this misconception passes away, and it becomes universally acknowledged that the judgment of Shakespeare in the selection of his materials, and in the manner in which he has made them, heterogeneous as they often are, constitute a unity of their own, and contribute all to one great end, is not less admirable than his imagination, his invention, and his intuitive knowledge of human Nature!

There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous Poems in which Shakespeare expresses his own feelings in his own Person. It is not difficult to conceive that the Editor, George Steevens, should have been insensible to the beauties of one portion of that Volume, the Sonnets; though there is not a part of the writings of this Poet where is found, in an equal compass, a greater number of

exquisite feelings felicitously expressed. But, from regard to the Critic's own credit, he would not have ventured to talk of an * act of parliament not being strong enough to compel the perusal of these, or any production of Shakespeare, if he had not known that the people of England were ignorant of the treasures contained in those little pieces; and if he had not, moreover, shared the too common propensity of human nature to exult over a supposed fall into the mire of a genius whom he had been compelled to regard with admiration, as an inmate of the celestial regions,—"there sitting where he durst not soar."

Nine years before the death of Shakespeare, Milton was born; and early in life he published several small poems, which, though on their first appearance they were praised by a few of the judicious, were afterwards neglected to that degree that Pope, in his youth, could pilfer from them without danger of detection.—Whether these poems are at this day justly appreciated I will not undertake to decide: nor would it imply a severe reflection upon the mass of Readers to suppose the con-

* This flippant insensibility was publickly reprehended by Mr. Coleridge in a course of Lectures upon Poetry given by him at the Royal Institution. For the various merits of thought and language in Shakespeare's Sonnets see Numbers 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others.

trary; seeing that a Man of the acknowledged genius of Voss, the German Poet, could suffer their spirit to evaporate; and could change their character, as is done in the translation made by him of the most popular of those pieces. At all events it is certain that these Poems of Milton are now much read, and loudly praised; yet were they little heard of till more than 150 years after their publication; and of the Sonnets, Dr. Johnson, as appears from Boswell's Life of him, was in the habit of thinking and speaking as contemptuously as Stevens wrote upon those of Shakespeare.

About the time when the Pindaric Odes of Cowley and his imitators, and the productions of that class of curious thinkers whom Dr. Johnson has strangely styled Metaphysical Poets, were beginning to lose something of that extravagant admiration which they had excited, the Paradise Lost made its appearance. "Fit audience find though few," was the petition addressed by the Poet to his inspiring Muse. I have said elsewhere that he gained more than he asked; this I believe to be true; but Dr. Johnson has fallen into a gross mistake when he attempts to prove, by the sale of the work, that Milton's Countrymen were "*just* to it" upon its first appearance. Thirteen hundred Copies were sold in two years; an uncommon example, he asserts, of the prevalence of genius in opposition to so much recent enmity as Milton's public conduct had excited. But, be it remembered that, if Milton's political and religious opinions, and the manner in which

he announced them, had raised him many enemies, they had procured him numerous friends; who, as all personal danger was passed away at the time of publication, would be eager to procure the master-work of a Man whom they revered, and whom they would be proud of praising. The demand did not immediately increase; "for," says Dr. Johnson, "many more Readers" (he means Persons in the habit of reading poetry) "than were supplied at first the Nation did not afford." How careless must a writer be who can make this assertion in the face of so many existing title pages to belie it! Turning to my own shelves, I find the folio of Cowley, 7th Edition, 1681. A book near it is Flatman's Poems, 4th Edition, 1686. Waller, 5th Edition, same date. The Poems of Norris of Bemerton not long after went, I believe, through nine Editions, What further demand there might be for these works I do not know, but I well remember, that 25 years ago, the Booksellers' stalls in London swarmed with the folios of Cowley. This is not mentioned in disparagement of that able writer and amiable Man; but merely to shew — that, if Milton's work was not more read, it was not because readers did not exist at the time. Only 3000 copies of the Paradise Lost sold in 11 years; and the Nation, says Dr. Johnson, had been satisfied from 1623 to 1644, that is 41 years, with only two Editions of the Works of Shakespeare; which probably did not together make 1000 Copies; facts adduced by the critic to prove the "paucity of Readers." — There were Readers in multitudes;

but their money went for other purposes, as their admiration was fixed elsewhere. We are authorized, then, to affirm that the reception of the Paradise Lost, and the slow progress of its fame, are proofs as striking as can be desired that the positions which I am attempting to establish are not erroneous.* — How amusing to shape to one's self such a critique as a Wit of Charles's days, or a Lord of the Miscellanies, or trading Journalist, of King William's time, would have brought forth, if he had set his faculties industriously to work upon this Poem, every where impregnated with *original* excellence!

So strange indeed are the obliquities of admiration, that they whose opinions are much influenced by authority will often be tempted to think that there are no fixed principles† in human nature for this art to rest upon. I have been honoured by being permitted to peruse in MS. a tract composed between the period of the Revolution and the close of that Century. It is the Work of an English Peer of high accomplishments, its object to form

* Hughes is express upon this subject; in his dedication of Spenser's Works to Lord Somers he writes thus. "It was your Lordship's encouraging a beautiful Edition of Paradise Lost that first brought that incomparable Poem to be generally known and esteemed."

† This opinion seems actually to have been entertained by Adam Smith, the worst critic, David Hume not excepted, that Scotland, a soil to which this sort of weed seems natural, has produced.

the character and direct the studies of his Son. Perhaps no where does a more beautiful treatise of the kind exist. The good sense and wisdom of the thoughts, the delicacy of the feelings, and the charm of the style, are, throughout, equally conspicuous. Yet the Author, selecting among the Poets of his own Country those whom he deems most worthy of his son's perusal, particularizes only Lord Rochester, Sir John Denham, and Cowley. Writing about the same time, Shaftesbury, an Author at present unjustly depreciated, describes the English Muses as only yet lisping in their Cradles.

The arts by which Pope, soon afterwards, contrived to procure to himself a more general and a higher reputation than perhaps any English Poet ever attained during his lifetime, are known to the judicious. And as well known is it to them, that the undue exertion of these arts, is the cause why Pope has for some time held a rank in literature, to which, if he had not been seduced by an over-love of immediate popularity, and had confided more in his native genius, he never could have descended. He bewitched the nation by his melody, and dazzled it by his polished style, and was himself blinded by his own success. Having wandered from humanity in his Eclogues with boyish inexperience, the praise, which these compositions obtained, tempted him into a belief that nature was not to be trusted, at least in pastoral Poetry. To prove this by example, he put his friend Gay upon writing those Eclogues which the Author intended to be burlesque. The Instigator of the work, and

his Admirers, could perceive in them nothing but what was ridiculous. Nevertheless, though these Poems contain some odious and even detestable passages, the effect, as Dr. Johnson well observes, " of reality and truth became conspicuous even when the intention was to shew them grovelling and degrading." These Pastorals, ludicrous to those who prided themselves upon their refinement, in spite of those disgusting passages " became popular, and were read with delight as just representations of rural manners and occupations."

Something less than 60 years after the publication of the Paradise Lost appeared Thomson's Winter; which was speedily followed by his other Seasons. It is a work of inspiration; much of it is written from himself, and nobly from himself. How was it received? " It was no sooner read," says one of his contemporary Biographers, " than universally admired: those only excepted who had not been used to feel, or to look for any thing in poetry, beyond a *point* of satirical or epigrammatic wit, a smart *antithesis* richly trimmed with rhyme, or the softness of an *elegiac* complaint. To such his manly classical spirit could not readily commend itself; till, after a more attentive perusal, they had got the better of their prejudices, and either acquired or affected a truer taste. A few others stood aloof, merely because they had long before fixed the articles of their poetical creed, and resigned themselves to an absolute despair of ever seeing any thing new and original. These were somewhat mortified

to find their notions disturbed by the appearance of a poet, who seemed to owe nothing but to nature and his own genius. But, in a short time, the applause became unanimous; every one wondering how so many pictures, and pictures so familiar, should have moved them but faintly to what they felt in his descriptions. His digressions too, the overflowings of a tender benevolent heart, charmed the reader no less; leaving him in doubt, whether he should more admire the Poet or love the Man."

This case appears to bear strongly against us:—but we must distinguish between wonder and legitimate admiration. The subject of the work is the changes produced in the appearances of nature by the revolution of the year: and, by undertaking to write in verse, Thomson pledged himself to treat his subject as became a Poet. Now it is remarkable that, excepting a passage or two in the Windsor Forest of Pope, and some delightful pictures in the Poems of Lady Winchelsea, the Poetry of the period intervening between the publication of the Paradise Lost and the Seasons does not contain a single new image of external nature; and scarcely presents a familiar one from which it can be inferred that the eye of the Poet had been steadily fixed upon his object, much less that his feelings had urged him to work upon it in the spirit of genuine imagination. To what a low state knowledge of the most obvious and important phenomena had sunk, is evident from the style in which Dryden has executed a description of Night in one of his Tragedies, and Pope

his translation of the celebrated moon-light scene in the Iliad. A blind man, in the habit of attending accurately to descriptions casually dropped from the lips of those around him, might easily depict these appearances with more truth. Dryden's lines are vague, bombastic, and senseless*; those of Pope, though he had Homer to guide him, are throughout false and contradictory. The verses of Dryden, once highly celebrated, are forgotten; those of Pope still retain their hold upon public estimation, — nay, there is not a passage of descriptive poetry, which at this day finds so many and such ardent admirers. Strange to think of an Enthusiast, as may have been the case with thousands, reciting those verses under the cope of a moon-light sky, without having his raptures in the least disturbed by a suspicion of their absurdity. — If these two distinguished Writers could habitually think that the visible universe was of so little consequence to a Poet, that it was scarcely necessary for him to cast his eyes upon it, we may be assured that those passages of the elder Poets which faithfully and poetically describe the phenomena of nature, were not at that time holden in

* Cortes *alone, in a night-gown.*

All things are hush'd as Nature's self lay dead:
The mountains seem to nod their drowsy head:
The little Birds in dreams their songs repeat,
And sleeping Flowers beneath the Night-dew sweat:
Even Lust and Envy sleep; yet Love denies
Rest to my soul, and slumber to my eyes.

Dryden's *Indian Emperor.*

much estimation, and that there was little accurate attention paid to these appearances.

Wonder is the natural product of Ignorance; and as the soil was *in such good condition* at the time of the publication of the Seasons, the crop was doubtless abundant. Neither individuals nor nations become corrupt all at once, nor are they enlightened in a moment. Thomson was an inspired Poet, but he could not work miracles; in cases where the art of seeing had in some degree been learned, the teacher would further the proficiency of his pupils, but he could do little *more*, though so far does vanity assist men in acts of self-deception that many would often fancy they recognized a likeness when they knew nothing of the original. Having shewn that much of what his Biographer deemed genuine admiration must in fact have been blind wonderment, — how is the rest to be accounted for? — Thomson was fortunate in the very title of his Poem, which seemed to bring it home to the prepared sympathies of every one: in the next place, notwithstanding his high powers, he writes a vicious style; and his false ornaments are exactly of that kind which would be most likely to strike the undiscerning. He likewise abounds with sentimental common-places, that from the manner in which they were brought forward bore an imposing air of novelty. In any well-used Copy of the Seasons the Book generally opens of itself with the rhapsody on love, or with one of the stories, (perhaps Damon and Musidora); these also are prominent in our Col-

lections of Extracts; and are the parts of his Works which, after all, were probably most efficient in first recommending the Author to general notice. Pope, repaying praises which he had received, and wishing to extol him to the highest, only styles him "an elegant and philosophical Poet;" nor are we able to collect any unquestionable proofs that the true characteristics of Thomson's genius as an imaginative Poet * were perceived, till the elder Warton, almost 40 years after the publication of the Seasons, pointed them out by a note in his Essay on the life and writings of Pope. In the Castle of Indolence (of which Gray speaks so coldly) these characteristics were almost as conspicuously displayed, and in verse more harmonious and diction more pure. Yet that fine Poem was neglected on its appearance, and is at this day the delight only of a Few!

When Thomsom died, Collins breathed his regrets into an Elegiac Poem, in which he pronounces a poetical curse upon *him* who should regard with insensibility the place where the Poet's remains were deposited. The Poems of the mourner himself have now passed through innumerable Editions, and are universally known; but if,

* Since these observations upon Thomson were written, I have perused the 2d Edition of his Seasons, and find that even that does not contain the most striking passages which Warton points out for admiration; these, with other improvements, throughout the whole work, must have been added at a later period.

when Collins died, the same kind of imprecation had been pronounced by a surviving admirer, small is the number whom it would not have comprehended. The notice which his poems attained during his life-time was so small, and of course the sale so insignificant, that not long before his death he deemed it right to repay to the Bookseller the sum which he had advanced for them, and threw the Edition into the fire.

Next in importance to the Seasons of Thomson, though at considerable distance from that work in order of time, come the Relics of Ancient English Poetry; collected, new-modelled, and in many instances (if such a contradiction in terms may be used) composed by the Editor, Dr. Percy. This work did not steal silently into the world, as is evident from the number of legendary tales, which appeared not long after its publication; and which were modelled, as the Authors persuaded themselves, after the old Ballad. The Compilation was however ill-suited to the then existing taste of City society; and Dr. Johnson, mid the little senate to which he gave laws, was not sparing in his exertions to make it an object of contempt. The Critic triumphed, the legendary imitators were deservedly disregarded, and, as undeservedly, their ill-imitated models sank, in this Country, into temporary neglect; while Burger, and other able writers of Germany, were translating, or imitating these Reliques, and composing with the aid of inspiration thence derived, Poems, which are the delight of the German nation. Dr. Percy

was so abashed by the ridicule flung upon his labours from the ignorance and insensibility of the Persons with whom he lived, that, though while he was writing under a mask he had not wanted resolution to follow his genius into the regions of true simplicity and genuine pathos, (as is evinced by the exquisite ballad of Sir Cauline and by many other pieces) yet when he appeared in his own person and character as a poetical writer, he adopted, as in the tale of the Hermit of Warkworth, a diction scarcely in any one of its features distinguishable from the vague, the glossy, and unfeeling language of his day. I mention this remarkable fact with regret, esteeming the genius of Dr. Percy in this kind of writing superior to that of any other man by whom in modern times, it has been cultivated. That even Burger, (to whom Klopstock gave, in my hearing, a commendation which he denied to Goethe and Schiller, pronouncing him to be a genuine Poet, and one of the few among the Germans whose works would last,) had not the fine sensibility of Percy, might be shewn from many passages, in which he has deserted his original only to go astray. For example,

Now daye was gone, and night was come,
And all were fast asleepe,
All save the Lady Emeline,
Who sate in her bowre to weepe:

And soone she heard her true Love's voice
Low whispering at the walle,
Awake, awake, my dear Ladye,
'Tis I thy true-love call.

Which is thus tricked out and dilated,

> Als nun die Nacht Gebirg' und Thal
> Vermummt in Rabenschatten,
> Und Hochburgs Lampen uber-all
> Schon ausgeflimmert hatten,
> Und alles tief entschlafen war;
> Doch nur das Fraulein immerdar,
> Voll Fiebrangst, noch wachte,
> Und seinen Ritter dachte:
> Da horch! Ein susser Liebeston
> Kam leis empor geflogen.
> " Ho, Trudchen, ho! Da bin ich schon!
> Risch auf! Dich angezogen!"

But from humble ballads we must ascend to heroics.

All hail Macpherson! hail to thee, Sire of Ossian! The Phantom was begotten by the snug embrace of an impudent Highlander upon a cloud of tradition — it travelled southward, where it was greeted with acclamation, and the thin Consistence took its course through Europe, upon the breath of popular applause. The Editor of the " Reliques" had indirectly preferred a claim to the praise of invention by not concealing that his supplementary labours were considerable: how selfish his conduct contrasted with that of the disinterested Gael, who, like Lear, gives his kingdom away, and is content to become a pensioner upon his own issue for a beggarly pittance! — Open this far-famed Book! — I have done so at random, and the beginning of the " Epic Poem Temora," in 8 Books, presents itself. " The blue waves of Ullin roll

in light. The green hills are covered with day. Trees shake their dusky heads in the breeze. Grey torrents pour their noisy streams. Two green hills with aged oaks surround a narrow plain. The blue course of a stream is there. On its banks stood Cairbar of Atha. His spear supports the king; the red eyes of his fear are sad. Cormac rises on his soul with all his ghastly wounds." Precious memorandums from the pocket-book of the blind Ossian!

If it be unbecoming, as I acknowledge that for the most part it is, to speak disrespectfully of Works that have enjoyed for a length of time a widely spread reputation, without at the same time producing irrefragable proofs of their unworthiness, let me be forgiven upon this occasion. — Having had the good fortune to be born and reared in a mountainous Country, from my very childhood I have felt the falsehood that pervades the volumes imposed upon the World under the name of Ossian. From what I saw with my own eyes, I knew that the imagery was spurious. In nature every thing is distinct, yet nothing defined into absolute independent singleness. In Macpherson's work it is exactly the reverse; every thing (that is not stolen) is in this manner defined, insulated, dislocated, deadened, — yet nothing distinct. It will always be so when words are substituted for things. To say that the characters never could exist, that the manners are impossible, and that a dream has more substance than the whole state of society, as there depicted, is doing

nothing more than pronouncing a censure which Macpherson defied; when, with the steeps of Morven before his eyes, he could talk so familiarly of his Car-borne heroes; — Of Morven, which, if one may judge from its appearance at the distance of a few miles, contains scarcely an acre of ground sufficiently accommodating for a sledge to be trailed along its surface. — Mr. Malcolm Laing has ably shewn that the diction of this pretended translation is a motley assemblage from all quarters; but he is so fond of making out parallel passages as to call poor Macpherson to account for his very "*ands*" and his "*buts!*" and he has weakened his argument by conducting it as if he thought that every striking resemblance was a *conscious* plagiarism. It is enough that the coincidences are too remarkable for its being probable or possible that they could arise in different minds without communication between them. Now as the Translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Milton, and Pope, could not be indebted to Macpherson, it follows that he must have owed his fine feathers to them; unless we are prepared gravely to assert, with Madame de Stael, that many of the characteristic beauties of our most celebrated English Poets, are derived from the ancient Fingallian; in which case the modern translator would have been but giving back to Ossian his own. — It is consistent that Lucien Buonaparte, who could censure Milton for having surrounded Satan in the infernal regions with courtly and regal splendour, should pronounce the modern Ossian to be the glory of Scotland; — a Country that has produced a Dunbar, a Bu-

chanan, a Thomson, and a Burns! These opinions are of ill omen for the Epic ambition of him who has given them to the world.

Yet, much as these pretended treasures of antiquity have been admired, they have been wholly uninfluential upon the literature of the Country. No succeeding Writer appears to have caught from them a ray of inspiration; no Author in the least distinguished, has ventured formally to imitate them — except the Boy, Chatterton, on their first appearance. He had perceived, from the successful trials which he himself had made in literary forgery, how few critics were able to distinguish between a real ancient medal and a counterfeit of modern manufacture; and he set himself to the work of filling a Magazine with *Saxon poems*, — counterparts of those of Ossian, as like his as one of his misty stars is to another. This incapability to amalgamate with the literature of the Island, is, in my estimation, a decisive proof that the book is essentially unnatural; nor should I require any other to demonstrate it to be a forgery, audacious as worthless. — Contrast, in this respect, the effect of Macpherson's publication with the Reliques of Percy, so unassuming, so modest in their pretensions! — I have already stated how much Germany is indebted to this latter work; and for our own Country, its Poetry has been absolutely redeemed by it. I do not think that there is an able Writer in verse of the present day who would not be proud to acknowledge his obligations to the Reliques; I know that it is so

with my friends; and, for myself, I am happy in this occasion to make a public avowal of my own.

Dr. Johnson, more fortunate in his contempt of the labours of Macpherson than those of his modest friend, was solicited not long after to furnish Prefaces biographical and critical for the works of some of the most eminent English Poets. The Booksellers took upon themselves to make the collection; they referred probably to the most popular miscellanies, and, unquestionably, to their Books of accounts; and decided upon the claim of Authors to be admitted into a body of the most Eminent, from the familiarity of their names with the readers of that day, and by the profits, which, from the sale of his works, each had brought and was bringing to the Trade. The Editor was allowed a limited exersise of discretion, and the Authors whom he recommended are scarcely to be mentioned without a smile. We open the volume of Prefatory Lives, and to our astonishment the *first* name we find is that of Cowley! — What is become of the Morning-star of English Poetry? Where is the bright Elizabethan Constellation? Or, if Names be more acceptable than images, where is the ever-to-be-honoured Chaucer? where is Spenser? where Sydney? and lastly where he, whose rights as a Poet, contradistinguished from those which he is universally allowed to possess as a Dramatist, we have vindicated, where Shakespeare? — These, and a multitnde of others not unworthy to be placed near them, their contemporaries and successors,

we have *not*. But in their stead, we have (could better be expected when precedence was to be settled by an abstract of reputation at any given period made as in the case before us?) we have Roscommon, and Stepney, and Phillips, and Walsh, and Smith, and Duke, and King, and Spratt — Halifax, Granville, Sheffield, Congreve, Broome, and other reputed Magnates; Writers in metre utterly worthless and useless, except for occasions like the present, when their productions are referred to as evidence what a small quantity of brain is necessary to procure a considerable stock of admiration, provided the aspirant will accommodate himself to the likings and fashions of his day.

As I do not mean to bring down this retrospect to our own times, it may with propriety be closed at the era of this distinguished event. From the literature of other ages and countries, proofs equally cogent might have been adduced that the opinions announced in the former part of this Essay are founded upon truth. It was not an agreeable office, nor a prudent undertaking, to declare them, but their importance seemed to render it a duty. It may still be asked, where lies the particular relation of what has been said to these Volumes? — The question will be easily answered by the discerning Reader who is old enough to remember the taste that prevailed when some of these Poems were first published, 17 years ago; who has also observed to what degree the Poetry of this Island has since that period been coloured by them;

and who is further aware of the unremitting hostility with which, upon some principle or other, they have each and all been opposed. A sketch of my own notion of the constitution of Fame, has been given; and, as far as concerns myself, I have cause to be satisfied. The love, the admiration, the indifference, the slight, the aversion, and even the contempt, with which these Poems have been received, knowing, as I do, the source within my own mind, from which they have proceeded, and the labour and pains, which, when labour and pains appeared needful, have been bestowed upon them, — must all, if I think consistently, be received as pledges and tokens, bearing the same general impression though widely different in value; — they are all proofs that for the present time I have not laboured in vain; and afford assurances, more or less authentic, that the products of my industry will endure.

If there be one conclusion more forcibly pressed upon us than another by the review which has been given of the fortunes and fate of Poetical Works, it is this, — that every Author, as far as he is great and at the same time *original*, has had the task of *creating* the taste by which he is to be enjoyed: so has it been, so will it continue to be. This remark was long since made to me by the philosophical Friend for the separation of whose Poems from my own I have previously expressed my regret. The predecessors of an original Genius of a high order will have smoothed the way for all that he has in common with

them; — and much he will have in common; but, for what is peculiarly his own, he will be called upon to clear and often to shape his own road: — he will be in the condition of Hannibal among the Alps.

And where lies the real difficulty of creating that taste by which a truly original Poet is to be relished? Is it in breaking the bonds of custom, in overcoming the prejudices of false refinement, and displacing the aversions of inexperience? Or, if he labour for an object which here and elsewhere I have proposed to myself, does it consist in divesting the Reader of the pride that induces him to dwell upon those points wherein Men differ from each other, to the exclusion of those in which all Men are alike, or the same; and in making him ashamed of the vanity that renders him insensible of the appropriate excellence which civil arrangements, less unjust than might appear, and Nature illimitable in her bounty, have conferred on Men who stand below him in the scale of society? Finally, does it lie in establishing that dominion over the spirits of Readers by which they are to be humbled and humanized, in order that they may be purified and exalted?

If these ends are to be attained by the mere communication of *knowledge*, it does *not* lie here. — TASTE, I would remind the Reader, like IMAGINATION, is a word which has been forced to extend its services far beyond the point to which philosophy would have confined them.

It is a metaphor, taken from a *passive* sense of the human body, and transferred to things which are in their essence *not* passive,—to intellectual *acts* and *operations*. The word, imagination, has been overstrained, from impulses honourable to mankind, to meet the demands of the faculty which is perhaps the noblest of our nature. In the instance of taste, the process has been reversed; and from the prevalence of dispositions at once injurious and discreditable,—being no other than that selfishness which is the child of apathy,—which, as Nations decline in productive and creative power, makes them value themselves upon a presumed refinement of judging. Poverty of language is the primary cause of the use which we make of the word, imagination; but the word, Taste, has been stretched to the sense which it bears in modern Europe by habits of self-conceit, inducing that inversion in the order of things whereby a passive faculty is made paramount among the faculties conversant with the fine arts. Proportion and congruity, the requisite knowledge being supposed, are subjects upon which taste may be trusted; it is competent to this office;—for in its intercourse with these the mind is *passive*, and is affected painfully or pleasurably as by an instinct. But the profound and the exquisite in feeling, the lofty and universal in thought and imagination; or in ordinary language the pathetic and the sublime;—are neither of them, accurately speaking, objects of a faculty which could ever without a sinking in the spirit of Nations have been designated by the metaphor—*Taste*. And why? Because

without the exertion of a co-operating *power* in the mind of the Reader, there can be no adequate sympathy with either of these emotions: without this auxiliar impulse elevated or profound passion cannot exist.

Passion, it must be observed, is derived from a word which signifies *suffering;* but the connection which suffering has with effort, with exertion, and *action*, is immediate and inseparable. How strikingly is this property of human nature exhibited by the fact, that, in popular language, to be in a passion, is to be angry! — But,

> " Anger in hasty *words* or *blows*
> Itself discharges on its foes."

To be moved, then, by a passion, is to be excited, often to external, and always to internal, effort; whether for the continuance and strengthening of the passion, or for its suppression, accordingly as the course which it takes may be painful or pleasurable. If the latter, the soul must contribute to its support, or it never becomes vivid, — and soon languishes, and dies. And this brings us to the point. If every great Poet with whose writings men are familiar, in the highest exercise of his genius, before he can be thoroughly enjoyed, has to call forth and to communicate *power*, this service, in a still greater degree, falls upon an original Writer, at his first appearance in the world. — Of genius the only proof is, the act of doing well what is worthy to be done, and what was never done before: Of genius, in the fine arts, the only infallible sign

is the widening the sphere of human sensibility, for the delight, honor, and benefit of human nature. Genius is the introduction of a new element into the intellectual universe: or, if that be not allowed, it is the application of powers to objects on which they had not before been exercised, or the employment of them in such a manner as to produce effects hitherto unknown. What is all this but an advance, or a conquest, made by the soul of the Poet? Is it to be supposed that the Reader can make progress of this kind, like an Indian Prince or General — stretched on his Palanquin, and borne by his Slaves? No, he is invigorated and inspirited by his Leader, in order that he may exert himself, for he cannot proceed in quiescence, he cannot be carried like a dead weight. Therefore to create taste is to call forth and bestow power, of which knowledge is the effect; and *there* lies the true difficulty.

As the pathetic participates of an *animal* sensation, it might seem — that, if the springs of this emotion were genuine, all men, possessed of competent knowledge of the facts and circumstances, would be instantaneously affected. And, doubtless, in the works of every true Poet will be found passages of that species of excellence, which is proved by effects immediate and universal. But there are emotions of the pathetic that are simple and direct, and others — that are complex and revolutionary; some — to which the heart yields with gentleness, others, — against which it struggles with pride: these varieties

are infinite as the combinations of circumstance and the constitutions of character. Remember, also, that the medium through which, in poetry, the heart is to be affected — is language; a thing subject to endless fluctuations and arbitrary associations. The genius of the Poet melts these down for his purpose; but they retain their shape and quality to him who is not capable of exerting, within his own mind, a corresponding energy. There is also a meditative, as well as a human, pathos; an enthusiastic, as well as an ordinary, sorrow; a sadness that has its seat in the depths of reason, to which the mind cannot sink gently of itself — but to which it must descend by treading the steps of thought. And for the sublime, — if we consider what are the cares that occupy the passing day, and how remote is the practice and the course of life from the sources of sublimity, in the soul of Man, can it be wondered that there is little existing preparation for a Poet charged with a new mission to extend its kingdom, and to augment and spread its enjoyments?

Away, then, with the senseless iteration of the word, *popular*, applied to new works in Poetry, as if there were no test of excellence in this first of the fine arts but that all Men should run after its productions, as if urged by an appetite, or constrained by a spell! — The qualities of writing best fitted for eager reception are either such as startle the world into attention by their audacity and extravagance; or they are chiefly of a superficial kind, lying upon the surfaces of manners; or arising out of a

selection and arrangement of incidents, by which the mind is kept upon the stretch of curiosity, and the fancy amused without the trouble of thought. But in every thing which is to send the soul into herself, to be admonished of her weakness or to be made conscious of her power;—wherever life and nature are described as operated upon by the creative or abstracting virtue of the imagination; wherever the instinctive wisdom of antiquity and her heroic passions uniting, in the heart of the Poet, with the meditative wisdom of later ages, have produced that accord of sublimated humanity, which is at once a history of the remote past and a prophetic annunciation of the remotest future, *there*, the Poet must reconcile himself for a season to few and scattered hearers.—Grand thoughts, (and Shakespeare must often have sighed over this truth) as they are most naturally and most fitly conceived in solitude, so can they not be brought forth in the midst of plaudits, without some violation of their sanctity. Go to a silent exhibition of the productions of the Sister Art, and be convinced that the qualities which dazzle at first sight, and kindle the admiration of the multitude, are essentially different from those by which permanent influence is secured. Let us not shrink from following up these principles as far as they will carry us, and conclude with observing—that there never has been a period, and perhaps never will be, in which vicious poetry, of some kind or other, has not excited more zealous admiration, and been far more generally read, than good; but this advantage attends the good, that the

individual, as well as the species, survives from age to age: whereas, of the depraved, though the species be immortal the individual quickly *perishes*; the object of present admiration vanishes, being supplanted by some other as easily produced; which, though no better, brings with it at least the irritation of novelty,—with adaptation, more or less skilful, to the changing humours of the majority of those who are most at leisure to regard poetical works when they first solicit their attention.

Is it the result of the whole that, in the opinion of the Writer, the judgment of the People is not to be respected? The thought is most injurious; and could the charge be brought against him, he would repel it with indignation. The People have already been justified, and their eulogium pronounced by implication, when it was said, above —that, of *good* Poetry, the *individual*, as well as the species, *survives*. And how does it survive but through the People? what preserves it but their intellect and their wisdom?

> "—— Past and future, are the wings
> On whose support, harmoniously conjoined,
> Moves the great Spirit of human knowledge——"
>
> *MS.*

The voice that issues from this Spirit, is that Vox populi which the Deity inspires. Foolish must he be who can mistake for this a local acclamation, or a transitory outcry—transitory though it be for years, local though from a Nation. Still more lamentable is his error who can

believe that there is any thing of divine infallibility in the clamour of that small though loud portion of the community, ever governed by factitious influence, which, under the name of the PUBLIC, passes itself, upon the unthinking, for the PEOPLE. Towards the Public, the Writer hopes that he feels as much deference as it is intitled to: but to the People, philosophically characterized, and to the embodied spirit of their knowledge, so far as it exists and moves, at the present, faithfully supported by its two wings, the past and the future, his devout respect, his reverence, is due. He offers it willingly and readily; and, this done, takes leave of his Readers, by assuring them — that, if he were not persuaded that the Contents of these Volumes, and the Work to which they are subsidiary, evinced something of the "Vision and the Faculty divine;" and that, both in words and things, they will operate in their degree, to extend the domain of sensibility for the delight, the honor, and the benefit of human nature, notwithstanding the many happy hours which he has employed in their composition, and the manifold comforts and enjoyments they have procured to him, he would not, if a wish could do it, save them from immediate destruction; — from becoming at this moment, to the world, as a thing that had never been.

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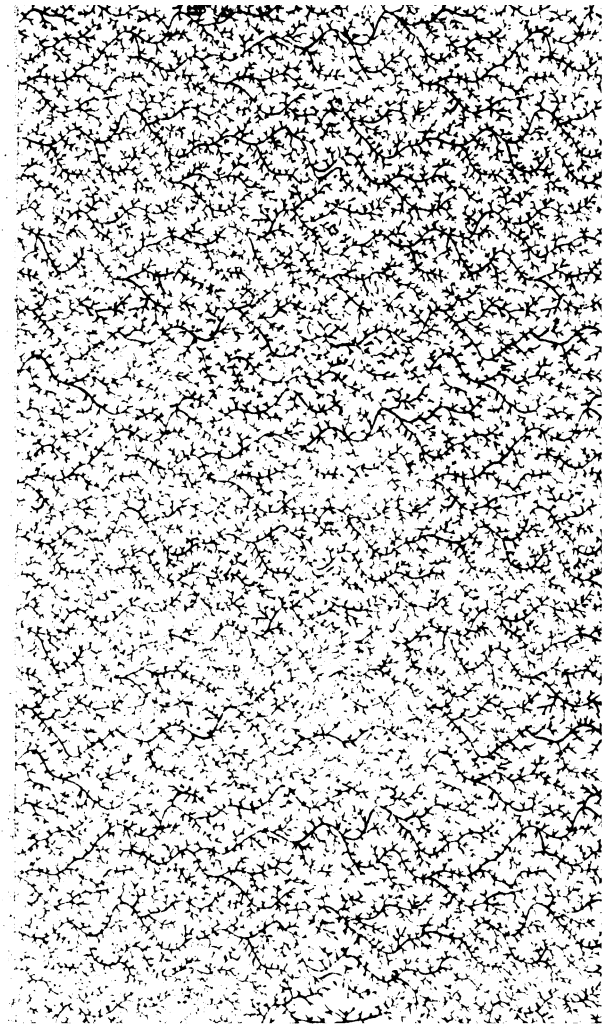
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